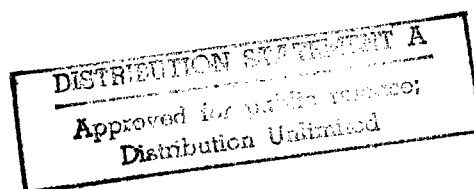


JPRS Report



Soviet Union

Political Affairs

19980616 037

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JPRS-UPA-89-069

CONTENTS

20 December 1989

NATIONAL PARTY AND STATE AFFAIRS

Relevance of Democratic Centralism to CPSU Examined [A.K. Masyagin; <i>SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA</i> , 11 Nov 89]	1
Discussion of Renewal of Party Ranks [F. Klyukach; <i>PARTIYNAYA ZHIZN</i> No 18, Oct 89]	4
Need for KGB Today Supported [V. Golovchenko; <i>TRUD</i> , 24 Oct 89]	8

REPUBLIC PARTY AND STATE AFFAIRS

Opinion Poll on RSFSR Draft Laws [V. Ivanov; <i>SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA</i> , 22 Oct 89]	10
Estonian Readers Comment on Draft Laws [<i>SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA</i> , 31 Oct 89]	13
Latvian SSR SUPSOV Report on Constitution, Electoral Draft Laws [A.V. Gorbunov; <i>SOVETSKAYA LATVIYA</i> , 7 Oct 89]	15

NATIONALITY ISSUES

Belorussian CP CC Secretary on Democratization, Other Issues [V.A. Pechennikov; <i>SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA</i> , 25 Oct 89]	19
Arbatov Views Implications of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact [G. Arbatov; <i>MOLODEZH ESTONII</i> , 29 Sep 89]	25
Estonian National-Cultural Association Profiled [Kh. Sheyn; <i>SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA</i> , 21 Oct 89]	27
Problems of Internal Soviet Armenian Diaspora Outlined [S. Vardanyan; <i>KOMSOMOLETS</i> , 12 Sep 89]	28
Armenian Bishop in Moscow on NKAO, Other Political Issues [Bishop Tiran; <i>KOMSOMOLETS</i> , 24 Oct 89]	31
Pan-National Armenian Movement Representative Views Blockade Issues	34
Azerbaijani People's Front Position [Kommunist, 10 Oct 89]	34
Armenian Refutes Azerbaijani Claims [A. Galstyan; <i>Kommunist</i> , 10 Oct 89]	36
Russians in Caucasus Reject Azerbaijani Appeals Against Armenians [Kommunist, 24 Oct 89]	38
Armenpress Sees 'Pan-Turkism' in Azerbaijani People's Front Claims [Kommunist, 17 Oct 89]	38
Jurist Denies Legality of Law on Azerbaijani Sovereignty [A.A. Sobchak; <i>Kommunist</i> , 31 Oct 89]	39
Komsomol Official on Samarkand University Informal Groups, Issues [K. Rashidov; <i>KOMSOMOLETS UZBEKISTANA</i> , 14 Oct 89]	41
Uzbek Officials Refute 'Provocative' Claims About Kokand Violence [D. Usatov; <i>PRAVDA VOSTOKA</i> , 4 Nov 89]	42

LAW AND ORDER

Supreme Court Official on Civilian, Military Justice [A. Koblikov; <i>KRASNAYA ZVEZDA</i> , 17 Oct 89]	46
MVD Press Center on Crime Rate [B.P. Mikhaylov; <i>CHELOVEK I ZAKON</i> No 9, Sep 89]	48
Belorussian SSR KGB Official on Phone Tapping [Ye.S. Akhremchik; <i>SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA</i> , 7 Oct 89]	50
Ukrainian Justice Official on Legal Reforms [V.S. Stefanyuk; <i>PRAVDA UKRAINY</i> , 3 Oct 89]	51
Ukrainian SSR MVD Chief on Crime in Republic [I. Gladush; <i>POD ZNAMENEM LENINIZMA</i> No 19, Oct 89]	52

MEDIA AND JOURNALISM

Official on Leningrad Video Production, 'Videosalon' Regulation [A.Ya. Vitol; <i>LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA</i> , 27 Oct 89]	56
Latvian Paper Scores Belorussian Press Coverage of Baltic Events [S. Shapran; <i>SOVETSKAYA MOLODEZH</i> , 10 Oct 89]	58
Lithuanian SSR Goskomizdat Chairman on Publishing, Financing Approaches [Yu. Nekroshyus; <i>SOVETSKAYA LITVA</i> , 20 Oct 89]	60

Georgian Journalist Runs Own Investigation of April Tbilisi Events	
[V. Vyzhutovich; IZVESTIYA, 11 Nov 89]	62
Kirghiz SSR Editors Hold Roundtable on Newspaper Content, Perestroyka	
[SOVETSKAYA KIRGIZIYA, 12 Oct 89]	66
Local Party Officials Dismiss Frunze Editors Over Newspaper Content	
[G. Shipitko; IZVESTIYA, 2 Nov 89]	68

HISTORY AND IDEOLOGY

Lenin's Responsibility for Postrevolutionary Violence Refuted [B. Kocherga; PRAVDA, 19 Nov 89]	69
Events Leading to Khrushchev's Ouster Reported [Yu. Asyutin; TRUD, 26 Nov 89]	71

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Belorussian SSR Hydrometeorology Chief on Monitoring Radioactivity	
[Yu.M. Pokumeyko; SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA, 17 Oct 89]	76
Plant to Handle Chernobyl-Affected Soil Proposed	
[N. Sukmanska; RADYANSKA UKRAYINA, 21 Nov 89]	77

SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ISSUES

Baltic MD Official on Military Provisions of LPF Draft Program	
[V. Sein; SOVETSKAYA LATVIYA, 3 Oct 89]	81
Latvian SSR Supsov Okays Riga Humanitarian Institute [SOVETSKAYA LATVIYA, 4 Nov 89]	83
Creation, Aims of Surgut Youth Organization Detailed	
[S. Kiselev; KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, 10 Oct 89]	91

Relevance of Democratic Centralism to CPSU Examined

90UN0320A Moscow SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA
INDUSTRIYA in Russian 11 Nov 89 pp 1, 2

[Interview with A.K. Masyagin, consultant to CPSU Party Building and Cadre Work Department, by V. Dyunin, correspondent of SOTSIALISTICHESKAYA INDUSTRIYA: "Not Dare to Command!"]

[Text] [Correspondent] Aleksey Kononovich, as the majority of the mass media in the country, we have developed a discussion about the state of affairs in the CPSU. Today I would like to discuss with you, as a specialist in party building, a subject that is connected with the operation of the principle of democratic centralism in the CPSU. It seems to me that many authors, who raise this subject in the mass media have so confused our reader that, in some letters received by the editors, he even is asking: "Will the principle of democratic centralism remain in the Statute at all, will our party be guided by it in the future?"

[Masyagin] I am convinced that it will and must.

If we want to have an active, creative organization, one which thinks in an acute political manner, if we wish that the decisions that have been developed in the collective search with the people fight their way into life with collective force, if we wish that the people, especially during difficult times, critical times, filled with doubts and instability, can be guided by the party, then democratic centralism is inevitable. One can be guided only by something which has a strong foundation and well-formed contours, it is impossible to be guided by something which instantly collapses from contact with life and comes unraveled. The party is needed by our present-day society, and the party needs democratic centralism.

[Correspondent] It turns out that in our country we do not have any problem with democratic centralism? And how could you in general formulate its essence?

[Masyagin] I shall begin with the second question. The essence of democratic centralism is well known. It is the organic combination of discipline and democracy, centralism and autonomy. The whole problem arises when it is required to secure this organic combination. Each of the "items" I have named is similar to medicine. All that is needed is to use it excessively or to take less than what is prescribed, and it turns from something useful into something harmful or useless.

Today our press and party documents are full of examples of how in the period of the cult of personality and the years of stagnation democracy in the party was transformed in many respects into a pure formality, discipline operated selectively in regard to party and other leaders and "rank-and-file" communists, and the political autonomy of even the largest party organizations was reduced to zero. Centralism reached such a level that neither the primary organizations nor the party committees had to especially trouble themselves to

determine the problems to be discussed—one after the other, the agendas came down from above, and as a rule, had to be carried out.

So there are very many problems with democratic centralism. First of all, to correct the multitude of defects, and this is difficult since a generation of party workers was raised on deformed requirements, and, as the election campaign for the elections of USSR people's deputies, it is by no means simple to get rid of this.

Secondly, in my view, the development of new approaches and norms is also necessary. Thus, party organizations are entering a most difficult sphere, plunging into the element of nationality problems, taking upon themselves the responsibility for their solution on the basis of democracy, humanism, and internationalism. Now autonomy is becoming real, the price of any solutions is increasing, saving references to the actions of the center in the case of mistakes will hardly help.

The subject of "minority" also deserves special discussion. The paradox consists in the fact that people talk a great deal about this, although no permanent institution of the minority has existed in our party since the beginning of the 1930's. Nevertheless, consideration of the opinion of the minority are the guarantee of a pluralism of views and opinions in the party, especially in the development of fundamental documents, are necessary.

And nevertheless the main thing is the organic, skillful combination, in every given situation, of democracy and discipline, centralism and autonomy. Such a combination, so that even the concepts of discipline and centralism (in contrast to democracy and autonomy) would cease to act in the role of some sort of scarecrow. It seems to me, V.I. Lenin gave a surprisingly profound formulation of the combination of these diametrically opposed concepts. The dialectics of the relations of the activeness of the party masses in the development of decisions and the activeness in their implementation, in his view, must lead to the creation of the kind of conditions where "our staff" will be guided by the good and conscious will of the army, which is marching behind the staff and at the same time directs its staff."

[Correspondent] In the newspaper MOSKOVSKIYE NOVOSTI of 15 October it is asserted that "the Stalinist interpretation of democratic centralism has become petrified," that "for half a century it underwent absurdly insignificant changes." What is your attitude to this assertion?

[Masyagin] I am familiar with this view. Especially as it was set forth earlier in slight variations in a few publications. To counterbalance this view, I would like to set forth my position on the subject we are discussing.

First of all, democratic centralism cannot only belong to Stalin, even if he took a hand in the formulation of its tenets. It cannot belong [to Stalin] if only for the same

reason for which, for example, the tenet of the presumption of innocence, which, according to the historians, was for the first time stated in the "Digests of Justinian", does not belong to this Byzantine emperor. He codified in his collection of laws what had been practiced in Roman law for a long time.

About the principle of democratic centralism, it should be said that it was developed by the entire party from the moment of its beginnings. The role of Lenin, above all, was enormous in this. But it should be taken into consideration that the norms of democratic centralism in many respects are universal and were used before the 20th century. These norms are applied today rather broadly in political practice.

[Correspondent] And who else is guided by democratic centralism?

[Masyagin] The majority of the communist parties today is guided by democratic centralism. Some norms are being utilized by socialist and social democratic parties, and even conservative parties, not to speak of a multitude of organizations and movements.

But I will say that we nevertheless have to separate the theory and the formulation of the very concept of democratic centralism from the practice which was applied under Stalin. These, as they say, are two different things. The perverted practice cannot be taken as the essence of democratic centralism itself.

Although at present they do not recommend frequent citations from Lenin, in reference to the fact that his statements relate to another time, I shall nevertheless take the risk to turn again to one of his thoughts, since it has on the whole a methodological character. Speaking about the fact that it proved impossible to carry out one of the proposals approved by the party congress, he noted: "Our troubles were caused not by the mechanism, but by individuals; the point is that some individuals, taking refuge under a formalistic interpretation of the statute, avoided the execution of the will of the congress."

If we approach the history of democratic centralism in our party with such criteria, we can, it seems to me, separate the grain from the weed.

[Correspondent] Nevertheless, it turns out that you do not see anything defective in the now available formulations, which reveal democratic centralism in the existing Statute, in contrast to the point of view, which as a whole subjects them to doubt and sees in them the result of the evil genius of Stalin?

[Masyagin] Well no, such a conclusion is incorrect. The matter is more complicated than a simple "yes" or "no" answer. I see, or I don't see.

Above all, factual accuracy is necessary. Of the formulations of democratic centralism given under Stalin at the 17th Party Congress, one has remained unchanged in the Statute now in effect: "Strict party discipline and the

subjugation of the minority to the majority." I think that this provision will be retained in the future as well, although, it goes without saying, changes may be introduced in the conditions of its application, for example, with respect to the minority, about which we have already talked. Thus it can hardly be said that "the Stalinist interpretation of democratic centralism has become petrified."

[Correspondent] Yes, but, perhaps, all these changes are of a purely editorial, bureaucratic-amplifying character?

[Masyagin] By no means. Here, for example, the 27th Congress amended the interpretation of democratic centralism with a completely new point, underscored "collectivity in the work of all organizations and the ruling organs of the party and the personal responsibility of every communist for the fulfillment of his obligations and party instructions." Present is an attempt to strengthen the democratic aspect in the interpretation of the principle.

Or another example. In the Statute adopted by the 17th Congress, one of the provisions of democratic centralism was defined as follows: "The appointment by election of all leading party organs from top to bottom." The 22nd CPSU Congress gave this provision a completely different formulation, which is also contained in the Statute currently in effect: "The appointment by election of all leading party organs from bottom to top." Do you catch the difference?

[Correspondent] In general, with difficulty. It turns out to be some sort of "tightrope-walking" with words—their transposition hither and thither. Well, what meaning do you see in this?

[Masyagin] I see enormous significance in this. In the formulation of the 17th Congress, the pre-October approach to the creation of the structures of the party and the imprint of the illegal conditions of activity were in many respects retained, where frequently they created and recreated party organizations and committees precisely from the top, where the center virtually determined everything. The 22nd Congress, although it took place already at the end of the period which it has come to be accepted to call the "thaw", nevertheless expressed an aspiration to greater assertion of the principles of democratism in the party.

I would say that, unfortunately, even today the potential of this formulation of the 22nd Congress has not been exhausted. The primary organizations must become the real basis of the party. They must delegate powers to the upper echelons. They must take a direct part in the elections of both the party leaders and the higher organs. And if it is impossible directly, then in another way to effectively influence the elections. The principal approaches to the development of the general party line, too, must be formed from below, and, finally, the primary organizations must become centers of political work and political struggle.

[Correspondent] Consequently, you see shortcomings in the present-day definitions of democratic centralism?

[Masyagin] It should be noted that it is not only this provision of democratic centralism that is not developed as it should be. For example, the periodic accountability. It has started to become very formalized and ineffective. It is no coincidence that the CPSU Central Committee adopted special measures to make accountability more urgent, where it proposed, after the 27th Congress, to hold reports on their direction of the cause of restructuring, on the role of concrete leaders in this. The campaign went livelier than ever, especially thanks to the participation of people not affiliated with the party.

Not long ago a plenum of the Leningrad Party Gorkom was held. The secretary for ideology was transferred to other work, and a new person was elected in her place. The question arose: Why does a worker leave and his activity is not summed up in any way, why his report about this is not heard. Indeed, accountability would increase a great deal if, during his transfer, the members of the elected organ, perhaps, even through voting, would give him an assessment and would decide the question already in accordance with it. How much less formalism of any kind would there be during the reports.

Finally, if we are talking about the formulation of an "unconditional binding force of the decisions of the higher organs for the lower ones", I see excessive absoluteness in the word "unconditional" for present-day times, although this has its historical explanation. In any case, in improving the relations between the higher and the lower organs, it is important, in my view, to carry through, in the entire Statute, the idea expressed by the Leninist words: "Not dare to command!"

[Correspondent] Some journalists assert that the Statute practically was not changed at the 27th Congress and did not reflect the processes of restructuring in any way. Is this so?

[Masyagin] I do not agree with this at all. I see in these assertions the manifestation of what I for myself call "rally" criticism, which, as a rule, suffers from the dilettantism, although it attracts people with its "revolutionary scope" and destructive pathos. I will only say one thing: More than 100 corrections and changes were introduced in the currently effective Statute at the 27th Congress.

[Correspondent] But, perhaps, these corrections are of a purely superficial character, they do not carry any substantial or normative weight, and they cannot be taken into consideration in the general, as it were global, assessment?

[Masyagin] I understand. Eagles do not catch a fly, they need a large prey. Statutes, like laws, are written so that here any details are important. But I am talking only about some, in my view, important and fundamental things.

The effective Statute, in contrast to the previous one, granted every party member the right to criticize at party meetings and conferences not only any communist, but also any party organ. I think that there is no need to comment on this.

The 27th Congress established a procedure under which a communist who has committed a misdemeanor answers for it, first of all, before the primary party organization. Is this not a step forward in the political and moral improvement of the party?

In the present Statute it is emphasized that the party operates on the basis of broad glasnost, that party committees utilize various forms for the involvement of communists in the activity of party organs on public principles, that the communists themselves are obligated to actively promote the increasingly fuller realization of socialist self-government of the people, and to strengthen the principle of social justice. So tell me, is this still not substantial, is this still not the vocabulary and not the concept of restructuring, is this a step backward? Of course, restructuring on the political plane is developing swiftly, and a great deal now seems inadequate. But this is already another question. But in principle we are all wise after the event.

[Correspondent] The following question somehow arises naturally with me. Why did our comrades in the discussions not notice these novelties? Evidently, it made its way into life in a faded way, it did not find a lot of reflection in party practice. Readers report that even now leaders do little in the way of accounting for their faults in the lower party organizations, public principles are poorly developed, and there is not the requisite support for the principles of self-government. Evidently, in the Statute there is some kind of defect here, it is still not working?

[Masyagin] I would not agree with this. The Statute can help, but it cannot replace the development of party practice itself. It can even state some kinds of concepts, which have not yet taken root in life, let us say, that self-government and that freedom of political discussions. In other words, to be a reference point, to serve as source of ideas. Well, and for the implementation of ideas, as Marx said, practical force must be applied. And this force they do not apply everywhere.

Thus, if we now descend from heaven to earth, we must see that in the party there have not yet properly developed many of the processes, under which the new possibilities and new rights would be naturally used by all communists and would prove to be extremely necessary to them. For this reason, we now say that the party is lagging behind, that there are crisis phenomena in it, that not all communists operate actively, that the primary party organizations do not influence many restructuring processes. Because of this, the impression is created that this is the fault of the Statute. As a matter of fact, it is not the Statute, but life itself, which is at fault.

[Correspondent] The 27th Congress called democratic centralism the guiding principle not only of the organizational building but also of the entire life and activity of the party. From this point of view, I would like to raise the following question. An enormous place in the life of the primary party organizations is occupied by the monitoring of the economic activity of the administration, during which, clearly, many attributes of democratic centralism are used. In your article in PRAVDA (of 23 August of this year), you proposed to repudiate such a right in the Statute. Can you not provide more detailed arguments for this proposal?

[Masyagin] All right, I will try.

First of all, granting the right of monitoring the economic activity of the administration virtually guaranteed the rigid coupling of the interests of the party organizations with the administrative command system. Receipt of the right of monitoring turned out to be an insidious thing, for it practically placed also the responsibility for the affairs of the enterprise on the party organizations. And this inevitably led to them to the fact that they began to identify their interests with the interests of the administration, that they lost their political independence in the assessment of production and economic matters, that they turned into their own sort of departmental politicized department of technical control, which came nearer in everything to it in terms of the results of activity being attained. This is why, for example, now, when group egotism in enterprises has developed most widely, we have not seen that the party organizations have any kind of effective immunity against this, that they are able to show themselves as an active force.

Of course, communists and many party organizations honestly aspired to help production in various stages, but history is indeed impassive, it factors out emotions. And, it seems to me that the monitoring of economic activity is a sort of form of non-economic compulsion in the national economy, which has departed for the past together with the pre-capitalist formations.

The second thing. We do not have serious legal foundations to establish the monitoring of the economic activity of the administration on the part of the party organizations. It does not emanate directly from the constitution. Perhaps indirectly from its Article 6, but this is little for a law. This right simply belongs to the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat, when revolutionary expediency was considered higher than any "formal" democracy and legality.

And the third thing. With the development and strengthening of the principles of self government, the monitoring of production receives the advice of the labor collective of the enterprise as its highest organ. Two constant controlling organs for one collective is extremely much. The communists will exert their influence through the technical control sector (STK) and other forms.

[Correspondent] What would you like to say in conclusion?

[Masyagin] Now a mass of proposals is being received as to how to transform the Statute and the principle of democratic centralism. Undoubtedly, many valuable opinions, but there are also those which, in my view, should be given deep thought beforehand.

The question is about something which is at times forgotten: In a larger sense, the party does not operate for the communists (or not only for them), but first of all—for the people. One can, of course, suggest a great deal that will secure greater ideological and organizational comfort for the communists in the party itself and make life easier for them in the environment where they work. But in the background, it seems to me, there must stand what helps us to solve the problems which concern the people.

Discussion of Renewal of Party Ranks

90UN0263A Moscow PARTIYNAYA ZHIZN in Russian No 18, Oct 89 (signed to press 5 Sep 89) pp 33-37

[Interview with F. Klyukach, chairman of the Organizational-Party and Cadre Work Department, Minsk Obkom, Belorussian CP, conducted by L. Yunchik: "Party Renewal: What It Will Be Like"]

[Text] The editorial staff received a letter with an unusual enclosure—a party membership card. After a journalistic and party investigation was conducted on this matter, I decided to have a frank discussion with the chairman of the Belorussian CP Minsk Obkom Organizational-Party and Cadre Work Department, F. Klyukach—a member of the party committee buro, under whose "jurisdiction" this case, which up until recently had been considered unprecedented, had occurred.

[Correspondent] Fedor Ivanovich, recently I had to perform an unpleasant mission—to submit to the commission for party control under the party obkom the party membership card of Nikolay Grigoryevich Usenok, who had mailed it to our editorial office. I admit, the feeling I got as I was doing this was as if I was sending someone off to their final journey.

[Klyukach] Well, that is right. There was one less communist. After this demarche, the party organization of the communal-housing administration of the "Beloruskaliy" production association excluded Usenok from its ranks. It is not for nothing that the party card is called the personal standard of the communist. He who values it carries the booklet with the dear silhouette of Lenin close to his very heart. However, a fighter who has fallen into desperation and panic, and particularly one who has sent his "standard" into a stranger's hands, is no longer a fighter, but rather a traitor to that Leninist cause which he had chosen to serve.

[Correspondent] Let us try to understand what leads to such a step. Let us begin with N. Usenok. Explaining his action in his letter to the editors, he writes: "I consider it useless to continue the struggle. You cannot chop wood with a pen knife. The anti-perestroika forces are not only not yielding their positions, but they are strengthening them. One gets the impression that our almighty bureaucracy has very quickly adapted to glasnost and is reacting to everything according to the old eastern adage: The dog is barking, but the caravan goes on. I have come to understand that such communists as I are not needed. The old folk saying is true: If you have lost money, you have not lost anything. If you have half-lost a friend, if you have lost faith—you have lost everything. Thus, for the present moment I have lost all faith in justice and hope for a change for the better in the processes of perestroika processes. Based on this, I have decided to leave the ranks of the CPSU".

[Klyukach] I got the impression that this person found himself in the party not because he wanted to give more. He worked as a foreman and was promoted to section chief. After his retirement, he continued to work in various official capacities, lately at the housing-communal administration. ZhKU [housing-communal administration] Chief N. Metelskiy gave him a third-level classification and directed him to work at the housing administration's carpentry-sanitary technician brigade No 1 without their approval. Usenok did not fit in in the brigade. Not having the skills of a carpenter, he also allowed certain violations of discipline and did not complete his job assignments. He was transferred to a lower paying job as a groundskeeper, and then with the consent of the trade union committee he was dismissed. The ZhKU party organization issued him a strict reprimand for his systematic non-fulfillment of duties under his labor agreement and labor regulations without valid reasons, and this reprimand was entered into his work record card. The "Beloruskaliya" partkom buro upheld this disciplinary action.

N. Usenok appealed to the commission for party control under the Belorussian CP Central Committee. The appeal was forwarded to the obkom. Several times our workers went to Soligorsk and thoroughly studied the circumstances surrounding the matter. They found no evidence of a prejudicial or improper attitude toward him. And although the communist acted insincerely and denied his fully obvious guilt, the members of the party commission nevertheless tried to have a humane attitude toward him. They took into consideration the fact that he had been in the party ranks for over a quarter of a century. They took into consideration the fact that the worker had been strictly punished for the same sins along an administrative line. They gave the following recommendation: To change the decision of the "Beloruskaliy" association partkom buro for his violation of labor discipline and exhibited rudeness, and to issue N. Usenok a reprimand. That is, to reduce the punishment. However, no sooner had the obkom buro reviewed this proposal than the party membership card was sent from Soligorsk to the editorial office.

N. Usenok's appeal, I believe, is nothing more than a smokescreen. The man himself did not want to remain in the party, and was seeking a reason for leaving it.

[Correspondent] During a business trip to Soligorsk, I met with Nikolay Grigoryevich. He gave me the impression of being a non-synonymous, overly categorical person. Here is what gave me an unfavorable impression at the time. He decisively stated that there had been no complaints against him while he was in the party. Yet the next day in the party gorkom I learned that the primary party organization of the House of Young Pioneers had issued him a reprimand for non-fulfillment of a party assignment.

How could he not have known or forgotten about the reprimand, if he himself had written the appeal to the superior party committee? I might add, the appeal was not upheld. The gorkom buro agreed with the decision of the primary party organization. When during a second meeting I asked Usenok to explain himself on this matter, he announced that he does not recognize that reprimand.

[Klyukach] What can you do if his painful perception of criticism addressed at him was combined with arrogance, disregard for the opinion of his comrades, or, for that matter, anyone at all on his part? He tried to get out of doing work himself, but he liked to tell others what to do.

[Correspondent] In speaking of his long-term membership in the party ranks, he reported with pride, I believe, that he helped his son and three brothers to become communists, and that his father had also been a member of the CPSU. Yet at the same time he broke this good family tradition. He admitted that he advised another son against entering the party.

And how do you perceive Usenok's letter to the editors?

[Klyukach] I fully admit that the former communist feels offended. Yes, there are many cases of social injustice and bureaucratism which many of us must still encounter. Yet we must fight, and not demonstratively step aside. Such a position does not flatter anyone. I believe that he sensed fully how the responsibility and exactingness toward every party member is increasing lately. That is why he preferred to step off to the side of the road.

[Correspondent] Recently I spoke with the chief organizer of one of the party raykoms. He categorically proclaimed: "There cannot be 20 million people in the avant-garde!" That is, the ranks of the party members, in his opinion, had grown excessively.

[Klyukach] I believe the avant-garde may be even more numerous. After all, there are many more good and honest people than there communists. All of them can replenish the party ranks. It is another matter that our approach up until recently has been incorrect. If you wanted to become a leader, you had to join the party. So

the office-seekers and opportunists strived as best they could to earn the right to a party membership card, and used it to gain high positions, privileges and benefits for themselves. Today we have finally understood that a manager does not necessarily have to be a communist. Moreover, the former order for acceptance to the party also no longer exists.

[Correspondent] But why is it, then, that some comrades part with their party cards at their own initiative?

[Klyukach] I believe that the cause of all this, as a rule, is dependency and mercantile interests. In one case someone, in his opinion, does not receive housing for too long. In another someone is "shortchanged" of something else. For example, P. Znak, an electrical assembler at the Minsk "Termoplast" Plant, gave up his party card as a sign of "protest" against non-payment of bonuses. Many believe that by paying their party dues they are losing money for nothing. Others do not want to attend the meetings or fulfill party assignments. However, not many will admit this honestly. Most of them motivate their "departure" from the party by references to negative facts and phenomena in our life.

Let me present a characteristic example. I. Yushko, a 50-year old churner at the Molodechnenskiy Confectionery Factory, wrote the following announcement to the party bureau:

"I ask to be excluded from the party for personal reasons. I support the CPSU line toward perestroika, democracy and glasnost. However, I cannot agree with the fact that there are many people within the party ranks who have no honor or conscience. They do not know any limits to distorting its line. They are responsible for mark-ups and violations of the law, etc. Yet despite all this many know how to be right, no matter how they discredit the party and our people. They do not voluntarily leave their positions, their 'warm chairs', but only harm the cause of perestroika. Therefore, I am going away from such communists".

Yet what is the real reason? To a member of the commission for reviewing his personal case, engineer L. Kozlovskiy, Yushko announced without mincing words: "I would rather buy a bottle of vodka or a piece of sausage with the money I spend on my party membership dues".

I. Yushko paid dues in the amount of around 9 rubles. At one time he served in the army, and receives a pension of 141 rubles. On top of all this, he supplements his income at the factory—a sizeable sum adds up. He felt sorry to deduct a note or two from this sum, so he made up a reason.

At the party meeting they asked Yushko to specifically name the members of the party organization who engage in mark-ups and thievery. He could not name them. It is no accident that laboratory technician Z. Lesked, engineer V. Savich and others, thinking at the meeting about the reasons for the "departure" of their former comrade

from the party, came to the conclusion that such a finale was predictable. In the few years that Yushko worked at the enterprise, he never once went to the farm which it supported, and never participated in Saturday work days. He categorically refused the party assignment of serving as a member of a volunteer people's brigade.

How could a person with such a dependent attitude lead others? How can those who do not want to spend money for party dues remain in the avant-garde?

[Correspondent] In former years we became accustomed to seeing a communist excluded from the party if he grossly violated the CPSU Charter. Yet a voluntary abdication of one's responsibilities—that is a generally new phenomenon.

[Klyukach] Our department has thoroughly studied the situation which has recently arisen. Numerous meetings and talks with CPSU veterans and the party active membership have helped to clarify the basic reasons. And here I will be forced to cast a stone into the garden of the press.

Under the influence of numerous publications in newspapers, journals, and radio and television broadcasts about the negative activity of a number of high-ranking party and state leaders, a considerable part of the workers have formed the opinion that in the party there are more people who have compromised themselves than there are real, honest communists. Yet, I dare to assure you, this is an erroneous opinion. Most party members are worthy of this calling. At the same time, very few materials are printed about communists who are indeed promoting perestroika, who are really showing concern about the people and about the conditions of their work and their life.

[Correspondent] I will not argue with this collective conclusion, judging by everything. Yet there are probably also other reasons as well?

[Klyukach] Of course. The transformations which are being implemented in the economy and in the social sphere as yet are not giving noticeable results. People are expressing their dissatisfaction at the erosion of the supply of cheap products which are in everyday demand, at the increased deficit, and at the shortage of food and industrial goods. This is associated by a certain part of the workers with the inability of the party to effectively manage the processes which are occurring.

Serious miscalculations have been allowed in the upbringing of the youth. Consumer attitudes are growing among a considerable part of the young people. Some are doubting the ideals on which more than a generation of Soviet people have been raised. They are directly or indirectly formulating in the youth a mistrust of the older generation, and of the correctness of the decisions made by the Soviet organs.

The party oblast committee is performing a detailed analysis of the processes which are taking place and the

situation in the labor collectives and primary organizations. We have outlined a number of measures for strengthening political and enlightenment work among the masses and increasing the authority of the party. This was largely facilitated by party meetings which were recently held at the primary organizations, where an exacting discussion was held regarding the avant-garde role of communists and their influence on the affairs of the collective.

[Correspondent] Yet the meetings have also been different—dull, inexpressive, and not fulfilling that mission which had been placed upon them. I am not speaking of this in vain—I had occasion to be present at them.

[Klyukach] In fact, at a number of party organizations the discussion for which the time was so right did not come about. In the "Timkovichskiy" Sovkhoz of Kopylskiy rayon the communists merely summarized the facts and tried to find those guilty for various shortcomings and omissions on the side. Neither the speeches nor the debates made hardly any mention of the role of communists in political work. At the meeting in the party organization of the "8 March" Kolkhoz in Logoyiski rayon, the speaker dealt primarily with production questions.

All the communists of the Soligorskiy Truck Motor Pool who spoke at the meeting limited their criticism to remarks addressed to the superior party committees. I fully admit that there were reasons for this. Yet criticism should not be, as they say, one-sided. Without a strict and exacting attitude toward ourselves and our party comrades, we will not go far, and will not be able to rid ourselves of the ideological looseness which has penetrated into the ranks of the party organizations. It is time to make this clear to everyone. However, many communists prefer not to "stand out", so as not to complicate their lives.

[Correspondent] About the problem which you and I analyzed in our discussion, writer V. Rasputin, speaking at the USSR Congress of People's Deputies, said the following. "In the course of the electoral campaign, the attitude of certain groups was detected by some candidates with the precision of a barometer. One of them had only to lay down his party ticket, and popularity would sweep him up as if on wings. I am not a party member and consciously did not enter the party, seeing how many self-interested people made their way into it. To be a member of the party was beneficial. That is why it has lost its authority. Today it has become unbeneficial, moreover dangerous, to be a party member. And to leave it at such a moment is certainly not an act of courage, as unknowing people are led to believe, but rather an expression of that very same calculation which led them to the party in the first place. It would have been courage 10 or even 5 years ago. Only have you not abandoned the ship too early? Do the senses of those who believe the ship to be doomed deceive them?"

[Klyukach] We have only one path to follow. Let us act, proclaiming the process of increasing the social activity

of the people. The cause of perestroyka will go farther along the outlined course, and the party will receive great support on the part of the workers. If we lose our initiative and allow ourselves to lag behind—then the cause of perestroyka will be dealt a serious, if not an irreparable, blow.

It is specifically from such an understanding of the avant-garde role of the party that we must today proceed. Yet for this **the party itself must constantly develop on Leninist principles, learn to live and work under conditions of democracy, placing its wage on the living bond with the people, on the development of an on-going dialogue with all the social forces. We must strive toward unity of word and deed.** It is specifically toward this end that the party orients us.

[Correspondent] And every communist must seriously think: Why does he carry the little red book? For what purpose does he want to tie his life with the party?

[Klyukach] The party is in great need of morally healthy, initiative-filled replenishment. It knows how to value not only its leaders, but also its rank-and-file members, who by their specific actions are moving perestroyka ahead. Recently the Molodechnenskiy party raykom buro accepted a young hog raising operator at the Kolkhoz imeni 50th Anniversary of October, Olga Rinkevich, as a candidate member. The buro members were interested in why she decided to join the party at a time when some people would not mind leaving it. "Specifically because I have decided to become a communist, because I want to really help the party and perestroyka in a difficult time".

These are not just pretty words. O. Rinkevich has earned her right to be in the avant-garde. At one time she completed the tekhnikum and worked as a technologist at an alcohol-making plant. Yet she exchanged this job for one that is considered by many to be non-prestigious. Olga herself is very happy with it. It is wonderful to work, and to perform a great social task. She is a deputy of the rayon soviet and a member of the collective labor soviet and the women's soviet. She has a good family. Her two little daughters are growing up. Her husband is a party member and is studying at the institute. With such a party replenishment we will be able to accomplish much. Such devotees of perestroyka, I am sure, will never reject their party membership cards.

The Belorussian CP Central Committee Plenum conducted an in-depth examination of the question, "On strengthening the influence of party committees and organizations on the socio-political situation in the republic at the current stage of perestroyka". The questions of the quality of the party ranks were also discussed in detail. It was noted that we will not achieve true combatancy of the party organizations if we do not increase our attention toward intra-party work, and toward membership in the CPSU. A number of new phenomena have been noted here, to which we are unaccustomed. Last year there were 5,000 less people

accepted as CPSU candidate members than there were in the previous year. For the first time in the Belorussian CP—and there are over 700,000 people in its ranks—the number of worker-communists declined by almost 2,000 people. This tendency is being retained also in the current year. The number of people leaving the party for non-payment of membership dues and loss of connections with the party organizations is increasing. There are also cases of voluntary departure from the party. To those who entered the CPSU for careerist convictions and those who are burdened by the fulfillment of party responsibilities we must bid farewell without the slightest regret. Here we must unswervingly follow the advice of Lenin: "Good riddance! Such a reduction in the number of party members is a huge increase in its force and weight".

However, the plenum stressed that those who motivate their action by the unsatisfactory pace of perestroika, by the inaction of the primary party organization, and by the gap between word and deed of certain leaders, deserve a different approach. We must work with these people, hold an honest and frank dialogue, and effectively react to their just critical comments and proposals.

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Need for KGB Today Supported

90UN0156A Moscow TRUD in Russian 24 Oct 89 p 2

[Article by V. Golovchenko, hero of the Soviet Union and hero of Socialist Labor: "Without a 'Secret' Stamp: An Open Letter"]

[Text] Don't look for any kind of revelations—I am not an intelligence officer. I simply consider it unjust that we are now speaking the truth about the barbarity of Stalinist times but seldom find words for those chekists who served and are now serving their cause honestly, with high principles, and bravely. It is true that articles have recently been appearing "in defense" of KGB workers, especially following the "Thunder" [Grom] operation, which the whole country knows about, but this is little, very little...

The fortunes of the VChK - OGPU - NKVD - KGB have included all kinds of things: struggling against counter-revolution and banditry, countering foreign intelligence services, protecting our state borders. Yes, there were also years of repression... Yagoda, Yezhov, Abakumov, and Beria, with their assistants "shouted" from the pinnacle of the punitive pyramid and the weeping and groans echoed throughout the whole land. But how many honest chekists there were, ones who demanded that the axe of repression be restrained! In the best of cases, they were not heard; in the worst, they shared the fate of the Stalinism's victims: In percentages, the chekists suffered hardly less than any other social group within our society.

...There is much that binds me to the KGB directorate for Krasnodar Kray: I visit there as a former front-line soldier, I speak before the employees of the Committee, and I am friends with many of them. But are there many citizens of Krasnodar who know why one of the streets in their city bears the name Atarbakov? Indeed this chekist, along with others—Kotlyarenko, Vlasov, Paluyan—fought to establish Soviet power in the Kuban. During the Great Fatherland War, seventy-four intelligence and sabotage groups comprised of chekists operated in the territory of the kray that was occupied by the fascists. They were not combatting mythical "spies" but German agents, about 750 of whom were arrested. The guilt of the enemies was completely proven—and was reconfirmed during the process of rehabilitation. When retreating, the enemy left behind a new agent network—it too was uncovered. Following the war, 118 bandit groups were rendered harmless.

Well, and so, to the present day: Has the struggle against foreign intelligence services been completed? No, and this is not likely to happen soon. The card files of the Krasnodar chekists contain the names and photographs of people who have been arrested for espionage in very recent times. Some of them we can talk about, such as Luigi Primari, a "mechanic" aboard a merchant ship, who was caught red-handed; others still remain secret.

The collaboration of our enterprises with foreign firms is adding a new dimension to the work of the chekists. Not all of our foreign partners sincerely want to assist perestroika, not all their plans are aimed only at mutual economic benefit. And the KGB directorate has already helped to save several million rubles in this area.

And there is more. I am sure that, had the KGB not involved itself in the struggle against the mafia, organized crime, bribery, and corruption, the scale of these would be more threatening today. It is not necessary to look far to find examples: The sensational case of "Iron Bella"—B. Borodkina, the "mother" of the Gelendzhik mafia is, as they say, fresh in the minds of many. For many years she enmeshed the city in a net of bribe-takers and plunderers, but the Krasnodar chekists put an end to all that. As a result of this case almost 70 people were brought to trial and the value of valuables seized in the course of this operation alone came to about a million rubles. And the "cotton" case, and the many arrests of racketeers in recent times?..

For today's young people, dreaming about real masculine pursuits, the prestige of the chekist remains high. Even today some hotheads are asking whether we need a state security service. I answer this with a question: What? Have the enormous amounts allocated for subversive work against the USSR and the countries of the socialist commonwealth really disappeared from the budgets of foreign intelligence services? And if millions have been allocated, they must be spent as directed. This is axiomatic. And they need to have cadres.

I would like to hope that I am writing for the common benefit. Under conditions of glasnost a possibility exists to publicly evaluate the activities of the Committee. It is necessary to think about the problems of this department. Thus, it has seemed to us that the KGB is equipped with the latest word in technology. In some part, certainly, this is how it is. But, when showing me a confiscated printing press which had been carried into our country in parts, the Krasnodar chekists lamented that they do not even have a copying machine and that they are not able to make use of use audio and video recordings in their investigative work. And the "civilian" lives of the KGB workers? Despite conjecture, they have no special benefits; they live on Armenian wages and in accordance with Armenian law.

Do we know much about the work of the chekists? In the movies, we see the spirited chases and resourceful "moves" of our intelligence people, and we read the same things in books, but, indeed, the daily existence of the state security workers is both more prosaic and more difficult. I was convinced of this once again when I

visited the museum of the Krasnodar chekists. I saw there such an abundance of evidence of dramatic and heroic events that I was pained and sorry: Why can't the residents of our city, especially the young people, not know about the work of these people?

Be so kind as to tell me, what is secret about this? If it were up to me, I would collect materials within the museum not only about the exploits of the chekists, but also about the prosaic side of their lives. But what's the use of this? Indeed, this museum, like the multitude of ones similar to it in the cities and villages of our country, is accessible to only very few. But such museums need to be made open to everyone who wants to learn how these people live and work and about the risks they take. Incidentally, both the chief of the KGB directorate for Krasnodar Kray and his comrades are in favor of such a solution. And this is no accident: Perestroika is intensifying within the Committee for State Security. Collegiality, democracy and, to an appropriate degree, openness and glasnost are gaining a foothold there.

Opinion Poll on RSFSR Draft Laws

90UN0135A Moscow SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA in
Russian 22 Oct 89 Second Edition p 2

[Article by V. Ivanov: "What Is Your Opinion? How Participants in the Sociological Poll of SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA and the Sociology Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences Center for Studying Public Opinion Assess the New Draft Laws."]

[Text] In several days, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR will consider draft laws on changes and amendments to the constitution and on elections of people's deputies and local authorities. These draft laws are extremely important to the future development of the Russian Federation and to improving its state structure. Discussion of these documents took place with great activeness and interest.

On the whole, what is the attitude of the people toward the new draft laws and to individual sections and chapters? How are those innovations perceived which are being proposed for implementation in state activities? In order to find out more about the general tendencies and assessments, the editorial staff of SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA, jointly with the Sociology Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences Center for Studying Public Opinion, conducted a survey by questionnaire in early October in various regions of the Russian Federation. During the course of the study, accomplished under the direction of the center's scientific workers V.T. Davydchenkov, V.P. Rodionov, and V.A. Afanasyev, 1,128 people answered the questionnaire, representing various categories of the population. The geography of the survey includes Moscow and Abakan, Kaliningrad and Krasnoyarsk, Vladimir and Kemerovo, Gus-Khrustalnyy and Tynda—a total of 12 cities, and also rural areas, kolkhozes and sovkhozes.

What did this section of public opinion, supplemented by an analysis of letters to the editor, reveal?

Lately, quite a bit is being said and written about expanding glasnost and democratization of our life. The external aspect itself catches the eye. It is much more important to examine the internal process of moral restructuring that is taking place under the influence of glasnost and democratization and is being expressed in changes in the position of people, their behavior, and ability to perceive differently those social obligations which yesterday were considered a given formality.

Discussions of certain state documents were also practiced from time to time before, and "impressive" figures of responses to them also existed. So, why do we still draw a sharp distinction between what was done yesterday and what is being done today? The very approach to the discussion of issues disturbing society has changed (more accurately, is changing). When we observe on a daily basis the heated squabbles over new the new draft laws at meetings of the nation's parliament, we become increasingly aware that there is something more behind these arguments than the desire to defend one's wording and one's proposal. The obedience and indifference,

which until quite recently reigned absolutely in those same Kremlin chambers, are becoming a thing of the past, and a spirit of a high degree of interest and responsibility is becoming established more and more strongly.

There is an increase in political activeness in the society; this is finding confirmation in many aspects of life. But is this process going deep enough? Are the consequences of that era of stagnation when formalism in executing civic duties gave rise to a lack of faith and public apathy still having an effect?

The following questions was among those on the questionnaire: "How familiar are you with the draft laws on elections of people's deputies of the RSFSR and deputies of local soviets, and with materials of their discussion?" Four answer choices were provided. What was revealed as a result? Let us turn to the materials of the study.

Only 35.7 percent of those surveyed could confidently confirm that they were familiar with the draft law on elections of people's deputies of the Russian Federation. Considerably fewer—only 26.1 percent—were familiar with the law on elections of deputies of local soviets. Of those taking part in the survey, 65.1 percent answered that they were familiar with materials of the discussion from newspaper articles and radio and television reports; 10.5 percent stated that they were not at all familiar with either the draft laws or the materials on their discussion.

We will not make these data absolute. But it is obvious that some portion of the population remains uninformed and indifferent to important steps of political reform.

The drafts of the new laws submitted for consideration to the session of the Supreme Court of the RSFSR contain many not simply innovations, but fundamentally different conceptual precepts and approaches based on real life and today's conditions. The pages of SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA have already talked about the most important changes over, which the debate has unfolded, and has reported on the typical differences in their assessments. Now let us look at these tendencies through a prism of the sociological study conducted and see how much its data confirm or, on the contrary, refute the preliminary conclusions. Let us begin with a group of questions related to the principles of formation of state power in the republic.

The Congress of People's Deputies, according to the draft laws being discussed, is to become its supreme body. This statute encountered overall support and approval, since, in the opinion of the majority of the participants in the discussion, the Congress with broad representation of those chosen by the people will make it possible to take into account and combine the diverse interests of the residents of the Russian Federation and of the many nations and nationalities. But what should its composition be? The draft law specifies the figure of 1,088 people's deputies. During the course of the study,

this question was asked: "Will this number of people's deputies make it possible to conduct effective work at the congresses?"

Let us say right away that this question proved to be complex for many of the survey participants—30 percent of those polled stated that it was difficult to answer; 38 percent of them believe that the Congress can work effectively and fruitfully with this number of people's deputies; and 32 percent are convinced that the overall composition of the Congress of People's Deputies should be smaller. Such a difference of opinions is quite explainable. The new structure of state power in our country is just beginning to take shape, and the experience of the first USSR Congress of People's Deputies, on whose work the assessments are naturally oriented, does not provide a clear answer. It is obvious that only the practical activities spread throughout the localities.

The participants in the survey as well as the authors of letters received by the working commissions of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR stated their opinion more definitively concerning the proposed procedure for forming the Supreme Soviet as the executive body of the Congress, its two-chamber composition (as we know, up to now there has not been such a division in the current Russian parliament), and the principle of electing members of the Supreme Soviet.

Among the survey participants, 44 percent stated unequivocally their conviction that such a two-phased system of forming the Supreme Soviet is fully justified. The total number of those who reacted negatively to such a structure was 51 percent; in this group's opinion, the population of the Russian Federation should be given the right to directly elect members of the Supreme Soviet. This thought, as we will remember, was also brought up at the USSR Congress of People's Deputies.

Incidentally, one aspect of this debate, which also evoked heated arguments at the first Congress, was the question on the procedure for electing the chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet. It also came up during the course of discussing the draft laws in the Russian Federation. A supplementary poll showed that 48 percent of those participating in the survey favor direct elections of the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR by all the republic's population, and 42 percent supported the provision of the draft law on his election by the Congress of People's Deputies.

It is interesting to compare these data with the percentage ratio of answers to another survey question: "What do you think of proposals to hold direct elections of the chairman of the executive committee [ispolkom] of the local soviet by the population of the city, rayon, or village?" The position here is clearly unequivocal: 76.5 percent of those surveyed favored such a procedure, and only 19 percent favored electing the chairman of the ispolkom only by the deputies of the local soviet. The logic of such a variant is quite natural—in a city or village, where every person is in the public eye and where

it is always possible to make a judgment directly about the personal qualities of a candidate for the post of head of the local power, with such a procedure it is easier to avoid mistakes and put at the helm a person who is actually respected and efficient and whose capabilities for such activities the voters have been able to see for themselves.

Now about the assessments of the proposal to have two equal chambers in the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR—the Soviet of the Republic and the Soviet of Nationalities. Let us recall what dictated the idea of this innovation.

From the very beginning it was emphasized that this proposal is by no means a copy of the union body of power. Its introduction is directly dictated by the nationality and territorial peculiarities of the RSFSR, which has in its composition 16 autonomous republics, 5 autonomous oblasts, and 10 autonomous okrugs and where representatives of about 100 nations and nationalities live. The proposal to introduce such a structure of the supreme bodies of power of the Russian Federation corresponds to the concept of expanding in every possible way the rights of autonomies, ensures supremacy of the law and a harmonious combination of the interests of the federation and the autonomous formations, and gives guarantees of the constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens. At the same time, the draft laws grant the right to autonomous republics, oblasts, and okrugs to determine for themselves the structure of their representative bodies.

These initial motives, corresponding to the basic directions of the nationalities policy developed by the party, met with understanding and support. This is also indicated by the proposals in the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR; this was also confirmed by the questionnaire survey data. The majority of the survey participants (61 percent) supported the need to have two chambers in the Supreme Soviet and believe that the Soviet of Nationalities should have the same rights as the Soviet of the Republic; 16.5 percent of those surveyed, also supporting this proposal in principle, stipulated that the "Soviet of Nationalities should exist, but its rights need to be limited;" and only 12.9 percent did not see any need to create two chambers.

Opinions differed somewhat more regarding the proposal to hold for the first time elections of RSFSR people's deputies according to territorial and nationality and territorial districts. Thus, 49.9 percent believe that creating nationality and territorial is necessary; 37.8 percent believe that "it is quite sufficient to hold elections of people's deputies only according to territorial districts;" and 12.3 percent stated that it is hard to say which way is better.

Readers of SOVETSKAYA ROSSIYA could not help but call attention to the polemics that have unfolded over the proposal of Leningrad workers to change the procedure for elections to local soviets and hold them primarily according to electoral precincts created at enterprises and in organizations. Substantiating their proposal on the

pages of the newspaper, they said that in critically interpreting the results of the elections of USSR people's deputies, one must admit frankly that the voice and opinion of the workers and peasants were represented less in the country's supreme bodies of power than even during the era of stagnation. "We are worried that the same thing will also be repeated in the elections to the local soviets!!!"—they reflected. It was proposed to implement this variant initially only as an experiment so the example of elections to the local soviets in Leningrad can be used as an opportunity to judge the actual social and sociopolitical effect of implementing the proposed election procedures.

Sharply opposite views were immediately revealed with respect to the Leningrad workers' initiative. On the one hand, a great number of readers responded (and we published their letters) who actively supported the idea of the Leningrad workers; on the other hand (and there were also quite a few of these letters), there were decisive opponents of changing the election procedures.

Regarding these polemics, it is quite interesting to see how the survey participants perceive the idea of the Leningrad workers. For clarity, we present the distribution of opinions in the various social groups in the form of a table. Table 1 shows how the answers were distributed.

Table 1.

	Workers	Kolkhoz Farmers	Office Workers	Engineering and Technical Personnel	Intelligentsia	Pensioners	Students
Production electoral districts should be created	46	65	42	36	30	23	36
Production electoral districts should not exist	26	19	42	42	49	56	39

Of course, one cannot draw definitive conclusions about the overall tendency of public opinion regarding this complicated problem, but there is no doubt that the proposal of the Leningrad workers touched a sore spot and that their arguments and reasoning, incidentally, also supported in many other worker collectives of the Russian Federation, cannot simply be dismissed.

The data from the questionnaire survey associated with the attitude toward the right to nominate candidates also

confirm the fact that people are worried about the representation of the working class and peasantry in bodies of power. This right, as recorded in the draft law, is set aside for labor collectives, public organizations, collectives of students, meetings for place of residence, and meetings of service members for military units. It would seem that in this case one could expect a certain unanimity. But in actuality, here we also see various positions of public opinion. We will again resort to detailed data.

Table 2.

	Should have right to nominate deputies	Should not have right to nominate deputies	No answer given
Labor collectives	89	2	9
Meetings for place of residence	70	15	15
Meetings of service members for military units	65	17	18
Collectives of students	62	19	19
Public organizations	52	27	21

As we can see, only the principle of nominating candidates from labor collectives received the absolute support of the voters. Some voters have doubts about the authority to nominate candidates from educational and military collectives, meetings for place of residence, and especially from public organizations. Thus, this fact also indicates that the proposals of the Leningrad workers make some sense, and the problem of representation itself touches upon fairly complicated phenomena that are felt in our life.

At the beginning of our conversation, we limited the topic to the most debatable aspects of discussion of the new draft laws. Of course, the materials of the study contain much interesting information on other positions, too. The draft law, for example, does not provide

for elections of deputies directly from public organizations—the CPSU, trade unions, the Komsomol, creative unions, etc. This is one of the fundamental differences from elections to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. Does everyone agree with this change, despite the large amount of criticism concerning this? Here are the results of the survey: One out of five people surveyed believes that all public organizations should be giving this right; 13 percent are inclined to grant this right only to individual public organizations. The majority—53 percent—deny public organizations the right to elect their own deputies.

Another thing. The draft law prohibits restricting voting rights of citizens of the RSFSR depending on ancestry,

social and property status, race and nationality, sex, education, language, attitude toward religion, time of residence in a given locality, and the type and nature of employment. However, no thoughts were expressed about the expediency of introducing some of these restrictions (in individual republics, we know, they have already been incorporated into the draft laws). The vast majority of those surveyed—87 percent—have a unequivocal opinion on this fundamental issue: There should be no restrictions.

It is known that during the elections of USSR people's deputies, pre-election district meetings where decisions were made on limiting the number of candidates played a large role. In the elections of RSFSR people's deputies, it is planned to limit their functions and convene them only when more than 10 candidates have been nominated for a district. An analysis of the information received shows that 45 percent of those polled believe that the pre-election district meetings should not be held at all—"all candidates nominated, regardless of their number, should participate in the elections."

In summary, the sociological survey conducted confirmed very gratifying changes in public consciousness. It showed that from now on law-making will no longer be a sphere of activities of only legal specialists and that the people have firmly announced their right to participate in drafting the laws by which they have to live and work.

Estonian Readers Comment on Draft Laws

90UN0272A Tallinn SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA in Russian 31 Oct 89 p 1

[Commentary: "In Principle, I Agree, But...: Discussion of New Estonian SSR Draft Laws"]

[Text] "In connection with the discussion of the draft law on the principles of local self-government in the Estonian SSR, I suggest that members of the newly elected Soviet in their work turn to local inhabitants for assistance. I am confident that voluntary helpers will be found. They will know what aid is needed by the residents of houses which are within the sphere of their influence. They will be able to 'take charge' of one or more houses, where they will monitor cleanliness and good order, as well as the economical use of water and electric power. They will be able to report all shortcomings to the members of the Soviet." (D. Arkhipov, veteran of the Great Patriotic War, Keyla).

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"I have attentively read through the draft law on elections to the Estonian SSR Supreme Soviet. Basically, the draft seemed to be quite well thought-out and balanced. It seems to me, however, that the residence qualification for candidates to the office of deputy should be more extended—about 10 or 15 years.

"I was perplexed by Article 8, Paragraph 1. Why should military personnel vote or be elected? After all, they play

practically no part in the republic's life. In civilized countries military personnel do not participate in elections." (A. Orlov, engineer, Tallinn)

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"On the whole, the draft law on elections to the Estonian SSR Supreme Soviet causes no objections. But the one thing that is not understandable is why military personnel are accorded privileges. As you know, in other countries they do not participate in elections. After all, they comprise a temporary contingent. And why is the provision concerning citizenship and residence qualification not extended to them?" (O. Reshovskiy, engineer).

* * *

On 13 October the republic-level newspapers published the Estonian SSR draft law entitled "On the Nationality Rights of Estonian SSR Citizens." In order to conduct a more fruitful discussion, it would be useful to reveal and explore certain complex concepts which are contained in this document. Let's take, for example, the introductory portion of this draft law. It states the following in particular: "The guarantee of nationality rights of all citizens of the Estonian SSR can be only the right of the Estonian nation, as the indigenous nation, to its own ethnic territory and to self-determination."

I am leaving aside many, in my opinion, disputable formulations in this section. We can speak and argue about them somewhat later. But as a beginning, I would suggest that the following questions be examined:

What constitutes the ethnic territory of an indigenous nation nowadays under the conditions of our multinational state?

How was the ethnic territory of the Estonian nation formed historically, and how were its borders changed? How have they been consolidated?

It would be a good idea to peer deeply into the centuries past and find out about the status of the ethnic territory comprising the islands of the Moonzundskiy Archipelago. Perhaps the Swedes also have certain rights to this territory.

Does the ethnic territory of the Estonian nation extend beyond Narva right up to the present-day Kingisepp in Leningrad Oblast and the land of the Pechora region in Pskov Oblast? Does the Estonian nation have rights in these areas?

It would be a good idea for the newspaper to publish a map which would clearly show the outlines of the Estonian nation's ethnic territory as of the present day. After this, the discussion on the topic of ethnic territory would be much more objective.

It would be extremely important, in my opinion, to list by name the authors of the draft, along with an indication of their official positions. And it would be best of all if they were to reply to the questions which have been posed. (E. Oynus, Tallinn).

* * *

I have attentively read through the Estonian SSR draft laws entitled "On the Principles of Self-Government" and "Statutes on People's Enterprises," and, to put it mildly, several fundamentally important factors have caused bewilderment. Specifically the following:

What is included in municipal property? The same things as before: bathhouses, barbershops, beauty parlors, and other low-capacity, low-profit enterprises, which frequently operate even at a loss. Moreover, most of them, according to another draft, would become people's enterprises and, to a considerable extent, get out from under the monitoring controls of the local soviets. From the draft law it follows that all more or less large enterprises would be subordinate to the republic, all deductions would be contributed to the republic-level budget, and from there, depending upon the kindness of the higher authorities, something might trickle down to the territories as well.

As we can see, there is nothing new here; the local soviets have no motivation to develop or improve the work of the enterprises situated on their territories, whereas the enterprises cannot contribute money to improve the infrastructure of a city where their staff members live. Again everything depends upon the ability of the soviet chairman to request and get allocations from the republic-level bureaucrats.

Formerly, the chairman of an ispolkom could be only a person elected at a session; but now he must be approved by the Supreme Soviet. Moreover, submissions for approval may be made only twice, and then the Supreme Soviet itself may appoint a chairman, without taking into account the desires of the soviet involved. This enables the republic-level organs to appoint only those persons they wish, without taking the opinions of the soviet and the voters into consideration. As the saying goes, that's the limit—democracy turned inside out.

The two drafts, where necessary and where unnecessary, prescribe strict observance of the Estonian SSR laws. Nowhere do you come across references to Union-level laws, or have they already become invalid on the territory of Estonia?

In Moscow people are now developing and discussing more progressive and democratic laws with regard to these same problems. We cannot ignore them, no matter how much certain persons would like to. And what would happen if, for example, Narva wanted to ignore the republic-level laws and follow those at the Union level instead?

And lastly, what about the uyezds, volosts, etc.? Is there a desire to separate out, a desire to redraw all the maps, atlases, and globes? It must be said that this would be an expensive pleasure. And for what purpose? Would we begin to live any better because of this? (V. Yefimov, Narva).

* * *

The Presidium of the Coordinating Council of the Estonian SSR International Movement of Working People has discussed the draft of the Estonian SSR law entitled "On Elections to the Estonian SSR Supreme Soviet" and considers certain statutes of this draft law to be unjustified, against the law, and requiring changes and additions.

In an interview for the newspaper SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA of 5 October A. Ryutyl declared that the "decisions which were adopted by this republic's highest organs of authority twice in less than a year contradicted the Union Constitution—not only in part, but on the basic problems...." Now the draft law on elections to the Supreme Soviet of this republic also contradicts the Union-level Constitution and human rights; it demonstrates again a scornful attitude toward the decisions of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium's decisions and the norms of international law, as well as an ignorance of the USSR Constitution. The draft law also contradicts the existing Estonian SSR Constitution. Thus, for example, Article 2, Paragraph 3 of the draft law establishes the residence qualification of a candidate for the office of deputy as 5 years.

An ukase of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium has already specified that the introduction of a residence qualification is a violation of the USSR Constitution and the international-rights acts which have been ratified by the USSR.

The residence qualification violates Article 46 of the Estonian SSR Constitution, which states that citizens of the Estonian SSR shall have the opportunity to vote and be elected to the Soviet of People's Deputies without regard to any residence qualification.

We propose that the residence qualification for candidates to the office of deputy be excluded from the draft law.

The Estonian SSR is a multi-national republic. We propose that, in order to protect the interests of this republic's citizens of diverse nationalities, an Estonian SSR Supreme Soviet be formed to consist of two chambers: a Soviet of the Republic and a Soviet of Nationalities. Elected to the Soviet of Nationalities would be 9 representatives each—as representatives of nationalities numbering 30,000 or more citizens (2 percent of this republic's population). The chambers of the republic's Supreme Soviet should have equal rights.

Article 11, Paragraph 1 of the draft proposes that elections be held in single-seat and multiple-seat election

okrugs. We know how, when elections to the local soviets are held, such a provision has made it possible to create okrugs which are sharply different as to the number of voters for one seat (as much as 60 percent).

Article 11, Paragraph 2 of the draft proposes two variants for forming election okrugs. Both variants, without any grounds or explanations, restrict the number of deputies to be elected from the cities of Tallinn, Narva, Kokhtla-Yarva, and Sillamya. Thus, the residents of Tallinn, who comprise 33 percent of this republic's voters, would have to elect, according to the best variant, 24 percent of the deputies.

This same article proposes the formation of a republic-level Supreme Soviet to consist of 105 deputies. Such a sharp reduction in the number of deputies (there were 285) sharply reduces the share of the people's participation in governing the state, and it violates the principles of democracy.

We consider that Article 11 of the draft infringes upon this republic's Russian-speaking population.

We propose that 145 deputies be elected to this republic's Supreme Soviet. Elections should be conducted in single-seat election okrugs with an approximately equal number of voters (10 percent).

Article 43, Paragraph 2 of the draft proposes that, when making out the ballot, numbers 1, 2, 3, etc. be placed opposite the last names of the candidates. This would be done with a view to transferring the vote "in case during the distribution of the seats there should arise the necessity of transferring the vote". But the draft does not specify when or under what conditions the necessity of transferring votes would arise. This creates the conditions for manipulating votes during the tally. We propose that the method of transferring votes be excluded. The ballot should retain the last name of the candidate for whom the voter is voting; the remaining last names are to be deleted.

Article 44, Paragraph 1 of the draft writes that the district commission shall tally up the votes for each election okrug. But Article 12, Paragraph 1 establishes that a district must be in one okrug. There is an obvious contradiction here.

Article 45 of the draft concerning the results of elections for election okrugs states nothing about how to determine these results. In general, the election law does not precisely stipulate who should be considered as elected. This is to be established not by the law but by a commission, and this is inadmissible in a democratic state. We propose that it be written in Article 45, Paragraph 1 that the candidate for the office of deputy be considered as elected who has received the greatest number of votes, but at least 50 percent of the number of voters on the lists for the election okrug in question. Provision should be made in Article 47 of the draft for holding repeat elections from among the two candidates for the office of

deputy who have received the greatest number of votes (at least 50 percent of the number of voters in the okrug).

Article 48 of the draft proposes to replace deputies who have withdrawn or been removed from office by organizing elections in the "given election okrug" and holding them every year on the third Sunday in March. But what if a deputy has withdrawn or been removed from a multi-seat election okrug? And if a deputy withdraws or is removed on the fourth Sunday in March, does that mean that the voters would not have their own deputy to a high organ of authority for an entire year? Once again we propose that elections be held in single-seat election okrugs. To replace a deputy who has withdrawn or been removed, a new deputy should be elected not later than 5 months after the day on which the last one left office.

Latvian SSR SUPSOV Report on Constitution, Electoral Draft Laws

90UN0149A Riga SOVETSKAYA LATVIYA in Russian
7 Oct 89, pp 1, 2

[LATINFORM report on speech by A.V. Gorbunov, deputy chairman, Commission for Drafting a New Edition of the Latvian SSR Constitution and the Law on Elections, at the 11th Convocation 13th Session of the Latvian SSR Supreme Soviet: "On the Latvian SSR Draft Laws, 'On Amendments and Additions to the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Latvian SSR' and 'On Election of People's Deputies of the Latvian SSR'"]

[Text] Esteemed deputies! At this session we are faced with resolving one of the most important questions in the life of the republic: What should the highest organ of state power be like, and what should its structure, functions and jurisdiction be? Three versions of draft laws, "On Amendments and Additions to the Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Latvian SSR," and "On Election of People's Deputies of the Latvian SSR," have been distributed today for your examination. The Supreme Soviet Presidium is taking into account the right of legislative initiative by both USSR People's Deputy Andris Plotnieks, and by the Latvian Jurists Society. In spite of the fact that all the features which found expression in these drafts have been discussed from all angles, we have not yet arrived at a unified opinion. Therefore, your task includes discussion of these drafts, and in the final analysis drawing up and adopting the optimal laws.

And, to go on, let me also express to the chairman of the Supreme Soviet Presidium my own opinion on the questions under discussion; an opinion which recently was completely supported by the republic Supreme Soviet Presidium. The Supreme Soviet Presidium believes that in the given complex economic and political situation the only way to return normalcy to the life of our society is—the way of democratic transformations. And here the most important thing is that we are promoting democracy not as an end in itself, but as a

means for the most effective organization of the life of society. Undoubtedly, one of the most important steps in this direction is drawing-up and adopting a democratic Law on Elections. The Supreme Soviet Presidium has spoken out in favor of our creating a Latvian parliament through democratic elections. But such elections can be assured only by observing the principle of general, equal and direct elections. This means that all citizens in the republic must participate on the basis of complete equality, organizing electoral districts with exactly the same number of voters, and providing for direct election of people's deputies to the highest organ of state power.

The results of popular discussion of the draft laws, discussions in the working group and on the Constitutional Commission, as well as work experience at the USSR Congress of People's Deputies and in the Supreme Soviet, have strengthened my conviction that it is possible to provide democratic elections in practice only after creating a single supreme organ of state power—the republic Supreme Soviet. I will cite what are in my view the most important arguments. It goes without saying that two-stage elections, when the Congress of People's Deputies forms the republic Soviet, appears at first glance the most attractive. At the congress, 260 deputies are elected, representatives of various social groups; and of these, it would seem that the best of these—the most respected, and the most professionally-trained members—would be elected to the republic Soviet, the permanently-operating parliament. But right away a problem arises. How shall we create the republic Soviet? The second version of the draft law stipulates that election of members of the republic Soviet takes place in delegations from the administrative-territorial units. If an administrative-territorial unit is represented by three or fewer deputies, they are automatically included in the membership of the republic Soviet.

The membership of the republic Soviet is confirmed by the Congress. But can we be certain that those who make up a republic Soviet created in such a manner would truly be the very best and the most deserving people? Moreover, the Congress would always have the last word, but its point of view might not always coincide with the opinion of this or that delegation of deputies. Thus the process of forming a republic Soviet could be endless. And if at first we would nevertheless manage to form a balanced republic Soviet, then what would it turn into as the result of annual rotation of deputies?

Nevertheless, the most important thing here in my view is the fact that multi-stage elections always reserve to various powers the possibility of influencing the election results, thereby distorting the will expressed by the deputies, and ignoring the principles of direct elections. A directly-elected Supreme Soviet would in all circumstances express the views and interests which prevail among the electors, and any violation of the natural equilibrium in favor of this or that social group would lead to the adoption of such laws and resolutions that would not support the solution of the republic's actual problems.

The economic and political reforms being carried out in our country require very energetic and qualitative preparations, and the adoption of new laws.

This requirement gives rise to a new question—on the structure of the highest organ of state power. The effectiveness of its activity, of course, will strongly depend on the kind of individuals elected as deputies, but we can discuss the main parameters already today.

First: This must be a continually-operating parliament.

Second: The mechanism for adopting laws depends upon the structure of the highest organ of power, which influences both the quality of the laws, and their effectiveness. The optimal variant of the mechanism's activity would be as follows: Legislation would be initiated, and the draft law discussed by the appropriate commission of deputies; next, discussion of the first reading at a session; next, publication for popular discussion; finally, discussion and adoption of the draft law at the second reading. It goes without saying, but it should be kept in mind, that here we are speaking about laws of cardinal importance, and not about resolutions.

Both the first and the second condition once again permit drawing the conclusion that the most acceptable variant is a legislative organ chosen by direct election and not by multi-stage elections, as it would be in the variant with the Congress.

One could cite other arguments as well, but I have already expressed my thoughts in an article published in the newspaper TSINYA. I believe the deputies are familiar with it. The Supreme Soviet Presidium is also aware of the fact that the Latvian CP Central Committee Buro, the Duma of the Latvian People's Front, the leadership of the International Workers' Front, the Latvian Society of Jurists, and other social organizations are all in favor of this variant.

One of the questions which was the subject of discussion and gave rise to various points of view is the question of the size of the highest organ of state power. Here too, unfortunately, the Presidium has neither definite criteria, nor convincing arguments. If we would but remember our history, we would see that the Sejm of the Latvian Republic consisted of 100 deputies, who represented many political parties. We have proposed three criteria for resolution of this problem:

First of all, that there would be assurance of the required number of deputies on the commissions; secondly, that the principle be observed that every rayon and city of republic subordination and every urban rayon would be represented by at least two deputies; and thirdly, that the electoral districts must be formed as much as possible with an equal number of voters (such that the differences would not exceed 25 percent).

It would appear that a number of 160 to 200 deputies would best meet the requirements set forth. It goes without saying, yet must be taken into consideration,

that with a large number of deputies the most varied socio-political currents would be more widely represented. But we cannot endlessly increase the number of deputies, since this principle can operate effectively only up to a point.

The interests of the electors are expressed in the Supreme Soviet by the deputies they elect by virtue of their platforms of economic and political views. It goes without saying that there are no other possibilities nor mechanisms. We must remember that the views which bring together both citizens and deputies in various organizations are political views. And nevertheless the question of how to reconcile the interests of the various social strata is a very important one, since their numerical make-up differs, and therefore the number of deputies who will represent them will be unequal as well.

Doubts were raised during the popular discussion: Having elected only a Supreme Soviet, will we be able to guarantee the activities in it; for example, observing the interests of our farmers, if in equal elections the rural rayons receive fewer mandates in the Supreme Soviet elected, than Riga and other cities of republic subordination? In search of a positive answer to this question the authors of the second variant of the draft law therefore stipulated the formation of a republic Soviet based on identical norms of representation from every administrative-territorial unit. But in trying to ensure the priority of the rural area, are we not being inconsistent and are we not consciously ignoring the fundamental principle of democratic elections—the principle of universal, equal and direct elections? Additionally, while maintaining a policy of direct elections, we cannot speak of advantages at the polls of one social group over another; on the contrary, we should speak of equal rights. Although, based on my own experience, I would like to assure you that in the process of voting at sessions of the USSR Supreme Soviet, political views do have a certain importance; but not social or national identity—although the latter cannot be altogether ruled out. In the USSR Supreme Soviet the interests of the various nationalities, or more precisely, republics, are represented in the Soviet of Nationalities. But that is not suitable for us, since we have no national-territorial entities. Therefore, the Presidium proposes supporting the proposal of the Forum of the Peoples of Latvia on the formation of a Consultative Soviet of Nationalities.

It order to draw up quality laws concerning the most varied areas of our lives, the newly-elected Supreme Soviet must strictly regulate the work of the commissions. For example, looking into the future, we see that not a single law which does not coincide with the interests of rural citizens can be adopted if, for the sake of argument, an agrarian deputy commission objects to it. In case of a conflict between this agrarian deputy commission and a commission of industrial deputies, once again for the sake of argument, a conciliatory commission made up of an identical number of deputies from both interested sides could come to their assistance. It goes without saying that one could object, that

this mechanism is imperfect, since the various administrative-territorial formations, as we know, would be represented by differing numbers of deputies. In my view it will never be possible for absolutely everything to be equal; what's more, that's not necessary. The main thing is that every deputy be able to carry out his respective, difficult task. But he can do this only when he is able to understand and express both the interests of his own region, and the interests of his republic as well.

The question of voter qualifications gave rise to many discussions. If we already had in effect a Law on Citizenship in the Latvian SSR the problem would then be much less acute. As we speak out for establishing a democratic electoral system, we must take into consideration the fact that if we deprive 10,000 citizens of the possibility of running for office, we might encounter a situation in which hundreds of thousands of Russians and citizens of other nationalities would vote for this or that deputy, not on the basis of his professional or political capabilities, but in consideration of his national origins. And the newly-created Supreme Soviet would come off the loser. Perhaps in the transition period the deputies of the Lithuanian Supreme Soviet would be wise not to stipulate any voter qualifications in the Election Law, and would continue to work on preparing a Law on Citizenship.

And today I would ask the deputies to refrain from political confrontation in resolving this question—since confrontation would have an extremely adverse affect on the political stability of the republic; and, moreover, would damage its economy. But it is precisely toward solution of economic problems that all our efforts and energy should be directed, because our standard of living is declining catastrophically. Therefore it is very important for us, having heard various arguments, to strive to find a joint solution to these questions. As before, there are conflicting opinions among the public with respect to participation in elections by military personnel stationed in Latvia. Various proposals have been received; both from the servicemen themselves, and from local Soviets and jurists.

The variant which stipulates formation of separate electoral districts for military servicemen, with a guaranteed number of deputies, not only does not solve this problem; on the contrary, it makes it worse.

Some decided that this is an unnecessary privilege for the military servicement, since no other category of the populace is guaranteed a definite number of seats in the Soviets. Others interpreted this variant as discrimination against military servicemen, since it deprives them of the possibility of taking part in elections at their place of residence.

Whereas in the case of elections of local Soviets the distribution of deputy mandates did not cause any serious problems, it turned out to be much harder to resolve this question at the highest organ of state power in the republic. Here, not only were the interests of the

military district in general manifested, but also the interests of almost all branches of arms and even individual military units. Obviously, the more complex the system we create, the more tensions and problems it causes. Therefore, the Presidium proposes that, just as at the time of the election for People's Deputies of the USSR, military servicemen and members of their families would take part in the election of People's Deputies of the Latvian SSR on a common basis. In such cases the electoral districts for military servicemen would become part of the common electoral district and the course of the elections would be subject, just as everywhere else in the republic, to public control.

And in conclusion, on the draft law presented by the Society of Jurists, which concerns the section on direct election of the president of the republic: the Supreme Soviet Presidium will today introduce this draft for examination at the first reading. This is a question which requires very significant changes to the Constitution. And before we accept it as a law, we should present it for broad public discussion, since the problem undoubtedly needs extensive discussion. Contradictory aspects can be discerned here as well. Today we are striving to actually put into effect the principle of "All Power to the Soviets." Does not the great authority of the president partially limit the sphere of action of this principle? In addition, at the stage of development in which we find ourselves today, we are not yet familiar with the status of the president. After all, for decades we have become

accustomed to the style of collective leadership. Since a president is nevertheless granted a considerable amount of power, we should elaborate these questions to a significant degree in our legislation: such as, for example, the authority and functions of a president; nomination and procedure for registering candidates for president; and a recall mechanism. But all the same, we must not fail to take into consideration the fact that direct election of a president would promote the unification of the populace in the republic, and would to a certain extent provide greater effectiveness to the actions of the highest organ of state power.

Thus, this is one of the questions which requires wide exchange of opinions, with the participation of the very widest sectors of the public, both individually, and in the person of social organizations.

And in conclusion I would like to say that, in characterizing the political situation of today, the Supreme Soviet Presidium is pleased to note that in the course of discussing the draft laws, all social organizations in the republic and the citizens as well were guided by fundamental democratic principles; therefore, no attempts were noted to bring pressure to bear for the adoption of one law or another, by force or by naked political pressure. This testifies to the fact that we have taken the first steps in the proper direction. The process of democratization of our society must continue through the efforts of all the progressive forces in the republic.

**Belorussian CP CC Secretary on Democratization,
Other Issues**

*90UN0294A Minsk SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA in
Russian 25 Oct 89 pp 1, 4*

[Interview with V.A. Pechennikov, Belorussian CP CC secretary, by Z.K. Prigodich, SOVETSKAYA BELORUSSIYA editor: "National Rebirth: Paths and Crossroads"]

[Text] [Z. Prigodich] Valeriy Andreyevich, one observes today in the ideological sphere—as, incidentally, one also does in other spheres of social life—a rather large number of serious and painful problems. But one problem that is probably one of the most acute ones that sometimes take on a dramatic nature is the problem of interethnic relations. As a practical worker who has access to a large volume of various kinds of information, what could you say about the reasons for the increased sharpness of these relations in our country and about their manifestation in Belorussia?

[V. Pechennikov] To a large extent, the answer to that question has been given in the materials of the recently held September CPSU CC Plenum, in the course of the pre-Plenum discussion of the CPSU Central Committee platform in the party organizations, in the labor collectives, in the commissions of USSR Supreme Soviet and the local Soviets, and in the periodic press. The problems of interethnic relations, as everyone knows, have also been dealt with in the statements made by participants of the first Congress of People's Deputies, at various kinds of scientific conferences, round table discussions, etc.

Speaking for myself personally, I can say that this is by no means a simple question, and our social scientists have not yet said their last word here. However, a major step forward has been taken in scientifically analyzing and interpreting the real-life situations that have developed and in defining policy as applicable to the present-day stage in perestroika. The CPSU CC Plenum, in my opinion, convincingly pointed out those positive features that have been achieved during the years of the Soviet authority in developing nations and nationalities, and in creating new relations among them that are based on friendship, cooperation, and mutual trust. Simultaneously it threw light on those negative features that caused the deformation of socialism and led to phenomena of stagnation in our society.

These deformations include the serious distortion of Leninist national policy. Wherein is this expressed? Primarily in the administrative-fiat, departmental approach to the needs of national development, to national conditions and traditions, in the limitation of the republics' sovereignty and independence, and in the mass repressions that affected entire nations and, to a considerable degree, the party and Soviet workers and the national intelligentsia.

Another factor that played its role was the underestimation of the real-life social processes, the lack of their

analysis and consideration in policy. We might recall, for example, our recent assertions concerning the complete resolution of the national question and the lack of any national problems.

All that occurred. A similar phenomenon also affected our republic, and has played havoc with living people and their fates. There is nowhere to go to get away from the past. It is on the critical reinterpretation of that past and on the taking into consideration of today's real-life situations that our present approaches are based.

Despite the overall roots of the deformations, the national contradictions in each individual region have their own specifics. In each republic one can discover the specific Gordian knots, the untying of which requires concrete analysis and just as concrete actions. The use of stereotypical solutions here would only be detrimental.

[Z. Prigodich] If you do not object, I'd like to speak a bit later about these actions. But first I would like to know your personal feelings with regard to the processes that are occurring today in our republics. What features in these processes please you, and what features alarm you?

[V. Pechennikov] I shall admit freely that my feelings are mostly ones of alarm. Every time that you turn on the television program "Vremya" or you read the fresh copies of newspapers, you find yourself wondering, voluntarily or involuntarily, "What kind of surprise will they be giving us today?" And I am not the only person with that feeling. Moreover, the situation could not be otherwise, inasmuch as certain national problems develop into interethnic conflicts, up to and including the use of weapons, or into political strikes and blockades. Putting it outright, I shall say that there is food for thought here. Let's analyze, for example, the situation that has developed among our neighbors—in the Baltic republics, in Moldavia. Because the intention there to introduce a number of new laws dealing with questions of the state nature of the language, citizenship in the republic, and the residency qualification led to a worsening of the political situation and to sharp confrontation between the indigenous and the Russian-speaking population.

That developed into a conflict on two fronts—the national and the international. In addition to them, the participants in the political struggle include dozens of associations that call themselves "parties"—the "national independence party," the "democratic party," "the national-democratic party." One sees actions being taken by various unions—the "democratic union," the "Christian union," the "Christian-democratic union," the "workers' union," the "nation, independent youth movement," ... There are also "salvation committees," "freedom leagues," "citizen committees," "independent forums and detachments," and even an "independent free youth column."

In general, one gets the feeling of a "frontline" situation both in the figurative and literal sense of that word. The complexity of the question consists in the fact that all of

this is occurring in close intertwining with the social contradictions that have come to a head. The conversion of production to intensive methods, to technological schemes that save resources and that are ecologically harmless, has been proceeding slowly. Added to this are the shortages in the consumer market, the growing increase in prices, inflation, the disappearance of inexpensive commodities, the speculative machinations of Mafia groups and cooperative members, and the growing crime rate. Under such conditions one begins to see with increasing clarity the social dissatisfaction of a considerable number of people—retirees, disabled individuals, young people. Hence the embitterment, the impulsiveness, and at times the tendency to use extreme actions, all of which are frequently used parasitically by political adventurers who encourage people to engage in illegal actions and interethnic conflicts.

[Z. Prigodich] To what extent is all this typical of Belorussia?

[V. Pechennikov] Much of what we have been discussing just now is also typical of our republic. I want to emphasize: much, but not all. Against the background of certain parts of the country, our situation is relatively stable.

But let us, nevertheless, take a realistic look at things and let us not delude ourselves on this score. The situation is a concept that changes, and in the final analysis it is all of us who will determine the direction in which the pendulum will swing. And, in my opinion, there is no doubt that there are forces that are stubbornly pushing it in the direction of destabilization. I feel that in this complicated situation, in our complicated, critical time, it is necessary to refer more frequently to the history of our republic's party organization.

Recently I was examining the stenographic report of the Belorussian CP CC Plenum that was held in July 1953 and my attention was caught by the statement made by Sergey Osipovich Pritytskiy. He said, in particular, "If we are talking about the depth of the case, then I shall report to the Plenum. When Tsanova and Frolov were unable to sit on the neck of the party's obkom... (he was discussing the Grodno OK [obkom] of the Belorussian CP), Tsanova decided to turn the head to Pritytskiy. To do what the Polish fascists had been unable to do. I feel that if, against me, the enemies of our party and our nation are fabricating cases, then that means that I am standing firmly on party positions which I shall not change for my personal well-being."

Of course, we are working today under completely different conditions, and we are on the threshold of a completely different era. But even today the situation requires of each of us the precision of our position, personal bravery and willpower, and devotion to the party's cause and to our goals and ideals. We must take our example from such people as S.O. Pritytskiy, we

must remember them, and must develop the best of what our predecessors contributed to the practice of party work and public life.

Well, as long as I have touched upon a historical topic, I would like to continue it slightly. About two years ago, in an interview in KOMSOMOLSKAYA PRAVDA, Kirill Trofimovich Mazurov said that he, and many other party workers in Belorussia, had been fortunate with regard to their teachers—persons who could think in state terms, persons who were intelligent managers and good people. Sharing his point of view, I would like to add: despite all the variety of the personal qualities of these people, and their merits and shortcomings, many of them were united by one very typical feature: when faced by all kinds of situational changes in policy and in economics, they attempted to do everything possible to prevent people from dashing from one extreme to another, although they did not always succeed in doing so. All one has to do is to recall the corn campaign of that time, the struggle to eliminate private plots, peasant homes, etc.

And if today, against the background of other regions, with all our shortcomings and difficulties, we appear to be somewhat better with regard to individual specifications, if the period of stagnation did not exert a deeply pernicious effect upon us, then I feel that a large amount of credit for that goes to those people, those party committees and organizations, and labor collectives that we came to replace. Our predecessors left us a base, a foundation, by resting upon which, and by using their experience, we would be able to withstand that complicated situation. Moreover, it is necessary to set off decisively on the path toward perestroika. It is precisely in this that I see, first of all, the meaning of our work today.

[Z. Prigodich] The republic's movement ahead along the path of perestroika would probably have been more successful if the tragedy at the Chernobyl AES had not occurred...

[V. Pechennikov] Of course the misfortune that came to Belorussia together with that accident, and the consequences of that accident, cannot be expressed in figures, in concrete amounts. The accident has already required many spiritual and physical efforts, funds, and investments, and it will require many additional ones in the subsequent years. This is yet another very serious source of the social and psychological strain in the republic.

It will be necessary to carry out an additional resettlement of people and a new set of measures with a total cost of more than 17 billion rubles. Our republic is not capable of resolving this with our own efforts. The Belorussian CP Central Committee, the government, and the Belorussian public are persistently raising the question of intensifying the center's attention to this problem.

In July 1989 a session of Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet considered the draft of the State Program for

Eliminating the Consequences of the Chernobyl Tragedy in 1990-1995. The draft was handed over to a USSR governmental commission in late August and, on instructions from N.I. Ryzhkov, is being developed by central economic agencies, the interested ministries and departments, and USSR Academy of Sciences. Our comrades are also taking active part in this work. After modification, the program will be reconsidered at the next session of Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet.

At the present time, a procedure has been defined for resettling people from rayons where it is impossible to obtain pure agricultural produce, and, practically speaking, the question of freeing Belorussia from executing construction operations in other parts of the country except Armenia has been resolved. Belorussia's meat and milk shipments to the union fund have been reduced, and this will make it possible to improve the supplying of the food products to the population in the rayons that have suffered.

There is apparently no need today to dwell in detail on all the aspects that constitute that document, since, after it has been enacted, it will be published in entirety in the press.

[Z. Prigodich] Recently we have heard emanating from various rallies statements to the effect that the republic leadership failed to undertake the proper measures to resolve the problems arising from the accident at Chernobyl AES. What can you say in this regard?

[V. Pechennikov] The necessary explanations of this question have been given repeatedly both in the press, and over television and radio. A detailed discussion of this topic was also included in the report at the recent session of Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet.

But you are right when you say that the question continues to be inflated, and to an increasingly active extent. Consequently, it is needed by someone, and in precisely this packaging. Therefore I have a specific proposal to make to your newspaper—pick up all the documents of the Belorussian CP Central Committee, Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers, the governmental commission, the party's obkoms and oblast ispolkoms, study the state of affairs locally, and provide your own answer to the question that was raised. If this proposal is accepted, I shall give it my complete support.

[Z. Prigodich] It is accepted. And now a question of a somewhat different kind. To what degree is the combination of the national and interethnic interests guaranteed by the version of republic cost accounting that is being introduced in Belorussia in 1990?

[V. Pechennikov] I shall cite specific figures and facts. At the present time on the republic's territory there are 288 enterprises of union subordination, which employ 58 percent of the total number of persons working in industry. But the contribution made to the budget by those enterprises is equal to 8.5 percent. At the same

time the enterprises of republic subordination produce only 7 percent of the industrial output.

Cost accountability will give us the opportunity to expand the sphere of the republic's management and to increase the republic's independence in administering socioeconomic development and in reinforcing the financial base. As is already known, it has been planned to transfer to the republic's jurisdiction 50 enterprises, organizations, and institutions of union subordination, and five Belorussian SSR union-republics ministries and committees, and republic agencies have been reorganized into the corresponding republic agencies. This work will be continued. In our republic the share of industrial output for the enterprises that are changing over to republic property will constitute approximately half, and subsequently will reach 70-80 percent. The republic will plan independently almost two-thirds of its capital investments.

The republic's budget will be formed from payments from the income received by enterprises and organizations of the subordinate management, and the entire amount of payments for land, for water, and labor resources from enterprises and organizations situated on the republic's territory, and proceeds from local taxes and levies from the public.

The stipulated measures, I will repeat once again, will substantially expand the republic's economic independence, will fill its sovereignty with real content, and will promote the more consistent carrying out of the principle of social justice. Whoever works better will also begin to live better. And this does not contradict internationalism, which does not have anything in common with the psychology and policy of people with a dependent's attitude.

[Z. Prigodich] Valeriy Andreyevich, what is your attitude toward the decision made by the September CPSU Central Committee Plenum concerning the independence of the communist parties operating within the confines of sovereign union republics?

[V. Pechennikov] I take a positive attitude. We support it and we shall implement it in our practical work. Incidentally, if you may have noticed, at the last plenum of the Belorussian CP Central Committee, which made the decision to convoke the next 31st Belorussian CP Congress, a commission to prepare the program of actions of the Belorussian CP was created. This is already a real step on the path of expanding independence.

At the same time we do not share the proposals concerning the introduction of federalist principles into party building that were rejected as early as the creation of our party. We view as pharisaical the statements made by those "champions" of "uncurtailed sovereignty" who, instead of engaging in a dialogue, rush to organize pressure on the republic leadership from the pages of certain central and Baltic publications, and even the foreign press, calling that leadership "Kremlin proteges"

and "Moscow litter," and attempting to deprive that leadership of its independent choice in resolving domestic problems. The pressure is made with the aim of weakening the anticommunist, separatist elements that are creating political structures and organizations that are oppositional to the Belorussian CP, and are operating along the lines of destabilization, thus threatening both perestroika and the national rebirth.

It seems to me that many processes that are occurring in the real world lie in a broad range which, in general form, can be outlined by such boundaries as "national nihilism" and "nationalism." These are the two extremes, the two dangerous boundaries, the crossing of which can have the most unexpected and most unpredictable consequences, and the ones that are most difficult to correct.

We have already been in the state of national nihilism and we are beginning only now, and just barely, to overcome its consequences, by taking the difficult path of national rebirth. And immediately certain "hot heads" are attempting to resolve the complicated questions by resorting to power methods, and dashing around from one extreme to another. They are attempting to deny radically internationalism and to replace the recent national nihilism with extremism and even modern nationalism.

This is a complicated situation and it is extremely important here to preserve one's restraint, responsibility, and political maturity. And this pertains first of all to Communists. We must not play up to extremist emotions, we must not fall into ideological torpor, but we must firmly carry out the principle of the unity of the national and the international. Internationalism today does not deny the national, but presupposes the national rebirth of large and small nations, their development, the filling of their life with new content.

[Z. Prigodich] When talking about national processes, we frequently use such concepts as "national self-awareness" and "national feeling." And yet, quite recently, we attempted not to use these concepts. We avoided them...

[V. Pechennikov] Yes, that did happen. But this is what I want to tell you. When an honest, progressive-minded person is called a nationalist, that is, of course, a label. But when a person's national dignity is insulted, when there is an attempt to accuse the representatives of another nation for one's own misfortunes, to falsify the past, and, in order to prove one's own national exclusivity, to preach self-isolation and separatism, this is now pure nationalism, rather than the applying of labels. And one should not be afraid of calling things by their own names.

I have already said that for many years we lived in a state of national anabiosis, considering the national questions to be resolved once and for all, and failing to notice the accumulated problems or the increasing national nihilism. Hence the completely natural awakening in the course of perestroika and the democratization of the

national self-awareness. Moreover, at the initial stage that growth was an important motivating factor for renewing society. However, that process has been occurring in different ways in various regions. In some places it has been traveling along a healthy path that is free of national intolerance and exclusivity, and in other places it gives rise to national confrontation and interethnic discord. In any instance we have all been convinced already—and this was also noted in the CPSU Central Committee platform—that national feelings are a very important factor that absolutely must be considered. The question lies in how we must act in the future to assure that the implementation of these feelings will not infringe upon the basic rights and freedoms of people of another nationality.

The process of national rebirth always begins with an analysis of the past, with the rebirth of progressive traditions and customs, with the restoration of historic awareness, culture, etc. It is necessary to follow this path. But, having taken that path, one must not forget the fact that national problems produce different offshoots. It is on that ground that various "weeds" sometimes begin to grow. Take, for example, such concepts—which in a few places have become very fashionable—as "migrant," "occupying force," "nonindigenous population," etc. Introduced into them is a subtext that prevents every Soviet citizen from feeling that he has completely equal rights anywhere in the Soviet Union.

Certain "informals" of extremist persuasion are eager to exist parasitically on the aggravated national feeling, on the "unexplored areas" of history. In this regard I would like to direct attention to the fact that our historians for the time being are greatly in debt to the readers. In the perestroika years that have elapsed, there have appeared a rather large number of articles illuminating various aspects of the history of Belorussia, its culture, etc. But these articles are by no means of equal value and in most instances were prepared by writers, rather than professional historians, and therefore they sometimes are weakly documented. A number of historians, apparently, decided to go out into the bushes and stay there until things quiet down, to sit things out, without engaging in the discussion of moot questions. Meanwhile those questions have been raised, so to speak, by life itself and we need to take a serious professional approach to them.

In our opinion, the time has come to create fundamental works dealing with the problems of the origin of the Belorussians, the origin of the Belorussian nationality, and its development as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. There is a need, from positions of modern science, to carry out a thorough analysis of the specifics in the development of the Belorussian nation as it made the transition to capitalism. Another question that requires new approaches is the question of the correlation and the reciprocal influence of the revolutionary-democratic current and the Marxist current in the national-liberation movement, and the question of the evolution of the Belorussian populist intelligentsia toward toward Marxism, toward the acceptance of the

Soviet system, and toward cooperation with the Communist Party. It is necessary in a thorough manner, rather than in a fragmentary way, to analyze the development of the Belorussian nation and the peoples populating the republic, under the conditions of the building of socialism. And there are other important questions.

The conducting of a well thought-out national policy will require the serious carrying out of sociological research. At the present time, on the base of Belorussian SSR Academy of Sciences, a sociological center is being developed, and specialists will be trained within the walls of Belorussian State University. The development of sociological services will help to overcome the speculative approaches and to assure that the decisions being made are based on a more solid scientific foundation.

[Z. Prigodich] Is there a danger that nationalism will expand and there will be a further complication of the national relations?

[V. Pechennikov] It is difficult to give a completely unambiguous answer to that question. First, these processes are occurring in different ways everywhere; secondly, there is already a party platform on national policy under present-day conditions, which platform provides landmarks for constructive work that undermines the ground under the nationalistic elements. The fate of socialism, the territorial and economic integrity of the Union, and the carrying out of the vital interests of Soviet citizens largely depend upon the state of affairs in our economy, upon the resolution of the food problem, the saturation of the market with commodities that we produce ourselves, upon the harmonizing of national relations, and upon the introduction into legal confines of the democratization that is overflowing its banks. Because it is no secret that the lagging behind in the legal regulation of the perestroika processes, the weakness of the legal protection of the internal forces and the militia, and the sluggishness of the local courts in a number of instances, together with other factors, have led to human sacrifices, to outbursts of terror on nationalistic grounds, and to misfortunes and sufferings inflicted upon people as a result of nationalistic insanity.

Democratization is not equivalent to weak authority—it is one of the forms of the state and is possible only within the confines of the state organization of any society. Democracy cannot be authorized. While guaranteeing rights and freedoms, it must regulate in detail all aspects of sociopolitical life. A very important pledge of democracy is the precise legal regulation of legislative procedure and the existence of discipline and political culture among the population.

The law must not only authorize something, but must also regulate in detail the specific question with a consideration of the domestic situation and the international legal standards.

[Z. Prigodich] It is well known that many countries have special legislative acts that protect society and the state against a schism and against national warpings, that

protect the rights of the national minorities, and that define the measure of responsibility for inciting interethnic enmity. Are we studying this legislative experience?

[V. Pechennikov] Any state, if it wants to be called a law-governed one and if it wants to guarantee in a real way the observance of the rights of its citizens, has laws like this. And certainly it would be foolish not to study their experience. For example, the final document of the Vienna meeting of the states participating in the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe proclaims the protection of the state's territorial integrity, recommends annexation to international pacts concerning human rights, and in sufficiently definite terms also mentions the rights of national minorities. "The participating state," the document reads, "guarantees the protection of the rights and basic freedoms of the persons belonging to national minorities on their territory."

It must also be noted that the domestic legislation of a number of countries stipulates responsibility for instigating interethnic enmity (United States, England, France, West Germany, Sweden—with punishment terms from one to five years); for insulting state symbols (for example, in Italy and West Germany this is punishable by incarceration for a period of up to three years); etc. We have been carrying out this analysis. In my opinion, this is a very interesting topic for discussion between journalists, on the one hand, and jurists and specialists on state law, on the other.

[Z. Prigodich] One cannot fail to agree that legislation today has become one of our most vitally important problems. For example, the discussion of the laws governing the state nature of languages, as has already been pointed out by practice, can develop into serious confrontation and even into strikes. How has the republic been preparing for the adoption of such a law?

[V. Pechennikov] As life demonstrates, the question of the status of languages today is no longer a question of the paths of national rebirth or the language in which we will write documents and speak at rallies. It is already a political question: how are all of us going to live and work in the future—as a single community, as a single harmonious family, or individually?

The experience of other republics indicates that, in the question of the status of languages, one-sided privileges or limitations are inadmissible, and coercion is even more inadmissible—all this will inevitably lead to a schism and to conflict situations. We also have already approached that stage when responsibility for decisions that are being made and for their consequences has greatly increased. This stage consists in that, in the linguistic problem, we are changing over from discussions to the making of decisions that will be of a profound and long-lasting nature. Therefore every inhabitant of the republic—whether he be a laborer, kolkhoz member, representative of the creative intelligentsia or deputy, party worker or an activist in an

independent associations—that is, all of us together, must be, first of all, people with common sense.

Belorussia is a multinational republic; its population according to the 1979 census was 79.4 percent Belorussians, 11.9 percent Russians, 4.2 percent Poles, 2.4 percent Ukrainians, 1.4 percent Jews, and 0.7 percent other nationalities. Nor can one fail to take into consideration the fact that every fifth family in our republic has mixed nationalities. In addition, in the history of the republic in the 1920's there already was a period when there existed four state languages—Belorussian, Russian, Polish, and Jewish. Our history has also had experience in “Belorussification,” the lessons of which were broadly discussed in the mass media.

The republic's inhabitants already know from the press that, for the purpose of preparing recommendations concerning the legislative regulation of the status of languages, a commission of the Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet was created in July 1989 under the chairmanship of N.N. Mazay, deputy chairman of the Belorussian SSR Council of Ministers.

The commission's task is to study the situation, to analyze all the materials and views with regard to this question that have been received both from individual citizens and from public organizations and the mass media, and to make recommendations to the Supreme Soviet's Legislative Proposals Commission. In general, the legislative work is beginning, and the culmination of that work will be the nationwide discussion of the Law draft and its discussion and approval at a session of the republic's Supreme Soviet.

[Z. Prigodich] Won't it turn out that our new laws governing elections or the status of languages will lead to the appearance of so-called “deprivees,” that is, persons who have been deprived of certain rights?

[V. Pechennikov] I do not think that this can happen here. One person, or a group of people, can, of course, make a wrong decision, but one would scarcely think that this could be done by an entire nation, particularly our Belorussian nation. It is, of course, important here to assure that no organizations, movements, or “fronts” usurp for themselves the prerogative to act in the name of their nation, to assure that they do not reject or trample upon the constitutional rights. The party and Soviet agencies and all the public organizations must operate within the confines of legality, rather than take the attitude to the Constitution, “The law is like a carriage shaft...” Then there will not be any “deprivees” in our republic, nor will any of the national persecution or squabbling that V.I. Lenin mentioned in his time will be allowed.

The problems of the rebirth of a language and a national culture were raised in a very acute manner by our creative intellectuals and the mass media. They were thoroughly studied and reviewed in the Ideological Department and the Ideological Commission of the Belorussian CP Central Committee, in the republic's

ministry of public education and ministry of culture, the Academy of Sciences, and commissions of the Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet. Moreover, the most diverse aspects of this complicated question were reviewed: historical, national, legal, social, and economic.

Consideration was also taken of questions of the linguistic situation among the republic's Polish and Lithuanian population and people of other nationalities.

[Z. Prigodich] What is being done realistically in the republic to develop the sphere of use of the Belorussian language? What is your evaluation of this process?

[V. Pechennikov] Naturally, we take a critical attitude toward the situation, evaluating what is occurring as being only the first-priority steps. This pertains both to the linguistic problem and to the process of the rebirth of the national culture as a whole.

In any instance, the 10th Belorussian CP Central Committee Plenum was, to a definite degree, a crucial one. Its decisions were widely discussed in the party committees at all levels, at the republic's Council of Ministers, and in the ministries and departments. The measures that were planned by the plenum were brought up for nationwide discussion and at the traditional August teachers' conferences.

What has already been done from among that which was planned by the measures? The most important thing is that there has been a change in the psychological situation around these problems. There has been a change in public opinion. Party agencies, ministries and departments, agencies of public education and culture, and pedagogical collectives have faced directly the questions that have been raised.

Smooth relations are being established to assure their cooperation with scientists and with the creative intellectuals. In this regard, an important stimulus has been the creation of the Tavarystva belaruskay movy [Belorussian Language Association], and the conducting of the republic “People, Culture, Perestroika” conference, which discussed the drafts of the “Rodnaya mova” [Native Language] and “Spadchyna” programs. Recently there was a so-called “alternative” board of the Ministry of Public Education, where, with the participation of a creative association of teachers and the republic council of school directors, various approaches to developing the republic's national school system were considered.

From the practical point of view, a large amount of work is being done to prepare new textbooks, teaching aids, and dictionaries; the BELARUSKAYA MOVA I LITERATURA and SPADCHYNA magazines have been created; works by the Academy of Science—“Belorusskiy yazyk dlya nebelorusov” [Belorussian Language for Non-Belorussians], “Kultura belaruskay movy” [Cultivating the Belorussian Language], and the six-volume “Bibliograficheskiy slovar belorusskikh pisateley” [Bibliographical Dictionary of Belorussian Writers]—have been prepared for publication; and associates at the Foreign

Languages Institute have prepared a trilingual (German-Belorussian-Russian) dictionary. Other trilingual dictionaries are being prepared. A series of books on scientific methodology have been published for Belorussian language and literature teachers, and the "Skarby movy" book series and "Narodnyya pismenniki Belarusi" have been published for school children. But these are only the first-priority measures.

The chief question is what is occurring in our kindergartens, schools, and institutions of higher learning. The changes in specifically this sphere will currently determine our forward movement. But for the time being, the situation remains complicated. As of the beginning of 1989 the republic's cities had only 32 preschool institutions where the instruction is given primarily in Belorussian; Belorussian language groups were working in 412 kindergartens. In schools in Minsk, Brest, Baranovich, Vitebsk, Grodno, Lida, Novogrudok, and Bobruysk, 145 classes with Belorussian language of instruction have been opened. At the same time, it must be noted that there are classes where only 10-13 school children are being taught. Another alarming situation is the fact that, for the time being, seven schools where all the first grades have Belorussian as the language of instruction have been opened only in Minsk.

In all the ordinary schools, Belorussian is currently studied starting with the first grade, and there has been a reduction in the number of school children who are released from studying it.

In institutions of higher learning, the question of expanding the use of the language in the teaching process was discussed at learned councils and one has seen definite shifts—an entrance examination on language is being used, the pedagogical institutions and the pedagogical tracks in the universities are changing over to the use of Belorussian so that the teachers in the various subjects can be fluent in it.

A large amount of attention is being paid to training the pedagogical cadres. Over a period of the past two years, the admissions to the philological schools in the specialty "Belorussian Language and Literature" has increased by 225 persons. A nighttime division in this specialty has been opened at Belorussian State University, and the admissions to the postgraduate program have been expanded. There has been an increase in the number of various courses in language teaching.

As you can see, despite all the complexities, real shifts have already occurred. I think that journalists have their own capabilities, together with the public education agencies, to study these questions more thoroughly and even to put under public scrutiny the fulfillment of the measures of the 10th Belorussian CP Central Committee plenum, as is being done, for example, by NASTAWNITSKAYA GAZETA.

[Z. Prigodich] In this regard it is natural to ask about the way in which the questions linked with the interests of people of other nationalities residing in the republic are being resolved.

[V. Pechennikov] Here too, specific steps have already been taken. A Polish cultural-enlightenment society and a society of lovers of Jewish culture have been created, and societies of people of other nationalities are being formed. This is a completely natural process and it must be supported.

Take, for example, the needs of people of Polish nationality. At the present time, more than 300,000 of them are living in Grodno Oblast. During the past school year the study of Polish was organized in 25 schools and in two nonschool institutions, and this year, in 126 schools in various forms, more than 6000 school children are studying Polish. Grodno University has been training instructors in the specialties "Belorussian-Polish Language and Literature" and "Russian-Polish Language and Literature." This year alone, 58 secondary-school teachers underwent linguistic retraining with the participation of Polish specialists.

In June 1989 the question of organizing native-language study by children of citizens of Polish nationalities was reviewed at the Commission for Public Education and Culture, Belorussian SSR Supreme Soviet. Thus, not only have the problems being defined, but the ways to resolve them have been planned.

The recent September 1989 CPSU Central Committee Plenum is an important stage on the path to improving national relations in the Belorussian SSR and making them more harmonious. But it was unable to answer all the questions of interethnic life, especially as applicable to the country's specific regions. The tasks of the local party organizations, guided by the overall principles of the policy that was worked out at the Plenum, is to apply them creatively in the real situations, guaranteeing the harmonious operation of workers of all nationalities to renew our society, and raising to a higher level the cultivation of interethnic communication.

Arbatov Views Implications of Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

90UN0245A Tallinn MOLODEZH ESTONII in Russian 29 Sep 89 p 1

[Interview with Academician G. Arbatov, director of the USSR Academy of Sciences USA and Canada Institute, conducted by ETA special correspondent V. Tsion: "Academician G. Arbatov: To Strive Toward the Leninist Variant"]

[Text] The regular meeting of the Commission of Deputies on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was held last Thursday in the Estonian permanent representation in Moscow under the chairmanship of USSR People's Deputy, Deputy Chairman of the Estonian SSR Council of Ministers, and republic Gosplan Chairman E. Savisaar.

Unfortunately, journalists cannot conduct "direct reporting" on the work of the deputies, since they are simply not allowed at these meetings. Those are the

rules, and no one can violate them. There was only one thing left to do: To wait until the end of the meeting and to ask one of the commission members to comment on its work.

I will not conceal the fact that most of all I wanted to speak with USSR People's Deputy and Director of the USSR Academy of Sciences USA and Canada Institute, Academician G. Arbatov—a well-known man with a deep knowledge of the subject, an objective and unprejudiced man capable of deep historical generalizations. Yet Georgiy Arkadyevich left the meeting before it was over. He was hurrying to the Union Supreme Soviet and did not have a moment to spare.

"Call me at work," he said on the run, "but for now, excuse me. This is very urgent..."

I called the institute for several days, and only on Tuesday, on the eve of my departure from Moscow, was I able to get a meeting with G. Arbatov.

An old house standing by itself on Khlebnyy Lane, just a few steps from Kalinin Prospect—this is where the USA and Canada Institute is located. On the second story, in a spacious and cozy office, I heard the unhurried, calm voice of its owner:

[Arbatov] Unfortunately, it turned out that I was participating in the very beginning of the commission's work, and then I went on vacation, although I did leave written instructions. I was away for a month, and then again rejoined the discussions. Therefore, it is difficult for me now to give an objective and complete evaluation of the commission's work, even though I do have the materials on its activity. Specifically, I have the draft of the document signed by 20 of its members. I have also heard some complaints on this matter.

As I have already said, my personal point of view on the essence of the question is stated in my letter. In short, it consists of the following. Of course, there were secret protocols. I believe that the very expressions and concepts which were used in them—"sphere of interests" and so forth—contradict the Leninist principles of foreign policy. These are terms from the arsenal of a great power.

As for the agreement, here we must judge in the spirit of history, i.e., we must understand the conditions under which it was concluded. I believe that at that time the interests of survival were taken as the cornerstone. There was a desire to keep the forces of the potential enemy as far away as possible from our borders. Yet this in no way meant that we had to divide up spheres of interest and express pretensions on this matter.

I also understand that many mistakes were made later in regard to the Baltic republics, just as, I might add, they were made in regard to the RSFSR, the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, the Transcaucasus republics, and any others. All of us, unfortunately, had to experience the same tragedy, and only today are we recovering from it. However, in

my note I objected to the effort to tie in the protocols and the agreement with the current state of affairs in the federation, and specifically with the current status of the Baltic republics and their currently existing boundaries. Because all this is not the result of some protocols or agreements with Hitler.

It is the result of World War II. It is the result of Yalta and Potsdam, and ultimately, the result of the Helsinki Agreement, which recognized the inviolability of boundaries as a necessary standard for peace in Europe.

This, approximately, is how my conception appears.

What can I say about the work of the commission? Some of its members have expressed their pretensions and, most evidently, will express them again very soon. The principle question is, I believe, the following: The commission, after all, is from the Congress of People's Deputies, and it must report on its work to the Congress. This moment, I might add, was discussed at the last meeting at the Estonian representation. I do not know how valid the demands of one of the Baltic representatives are for the Supreme Soviet to hear the report. Later I also thought about how justified the demands were that the report be publicized and approved by the commission even before it is presented to the Congress. However, this is a legal question, and must be precisely defined. This is about the work of the commission.

I will summarize: There have been protocols, protocols that contradict the principles of our foreign policy. Yet all this has no relation to the current status of the Baltic republics. That is, historically, of course, it does, but legally and politically—it does not. The present day, I will repeat, is the result of all of World War II, and the result of other agreements.

In this connection I must say that I understand the bitterness caused by the injustice which many people in the Baltic republics are experiencing. I can say too that this bitterness is felt also in other republics—bitterness over those crimes which were committed during a certain period in our history. Yet at the same time we must take a realistic view of the situation in which we live today. It seems to me that today all the hopes of every republic, including the Baltic republics, for national self-expression and sovereignty may be associated only with the success of the policy of perestroika. Therefore, it seems to me very imprudent when the policy of perestroika is undermined by emotions. We must keep all this in mind, just as we must remember that we cannot restore justice by creating new injustices.

We also should not forget that such an approach is ruinous to such a good cause as the strengthening of the independence of the republics and the transformation of the Soviet Union into a true federation, where each republic would be a sovereign state, delegating to the Union only certain rights which are associated with foreign policy and defense matters. This is the Leninist conception, which we have never yet experienced. Lenin expressed such a position, but in fact it was the Stalinist

conception of autonomization which won out. However, today we must strive toward the Leninist variant! I will say honestly: All the regions, including the RSFSR and Moscow, are pinning great hopes on the fact that the Baltic republics will pave the way for regional cost accounting and will show something that will be beneficial to all. There are many capacities here which must be utilized. Yet attitudes of confrontation may lead only to escalation of extremism.

However, I believe that Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians are cool-headed, rational people with clearly expressed common sense. They will not succumb to such temptations, and will worthily pass through this period of very complex political changes. They will do everything that is in their interests and, I might add, in the interests of the entire Union as well.

In conclusion I will stress once again: All of our interests and hopes, as well as those of the Baltic, may today be tied only with the success of perestroika. Therefore we must measure our every step, our every action against this, and against the processes of renovation which are taking place in the country. There can hardly be some island remaining as a "heaven on Earth" if all around it there are raging hurricanes... We must understand this. And this concerns not only three republics. It concerns all of Europe, and ultimately, the entire world...

Estonian National-Cultural Association Profiled

90UN0246A Tallinn SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA in
Russian 21 Oct 89 p 3

[Interview with Khagi Sheyn, president, Association of Estonian National-Cultural Societies, by V. Akimov: "We Are a Very Young Political Force"]

[Text] Our newspaper continues to publish materials providing some idea of the diversity of the political forces existing in this republic nowadays and participating in one way or another in preparing for the elections to the organs of local self-government. In three previous issues of SOVETSKAYA ESTONIYA you had the opportunity to become acquainted with statements by the representatives of the People's Front, the republic-level Council of Strike Committees, and committees of Estonian citizens. We hope that our readers will bear in mind the following: while according these interviewees the opportunity to set forth their own positions, the editors reserve for themselves the right not to share their points of view.

You can read the next interview in this series in the issue for Tuesday, 24 October.

[Kh. Sheyn] And it is precisely because we are still a very young political force that merely posing the question of a very active participation in the present-day election campaign is somewhat premature for us. We have just finished tackling a group of problems connected with preparing and conducting the Forum of Estonia's Peoples, and such a rapid switch to other concerns is a complicated matter. And, at the same time, these elections are the first for us in

which we can participate independently. It would, of course, not be sensible to allow such an opportunity to slip by. We discussed these problems and came to the following conclusion: we will contend for deputies' seats in the local soviets. The national-cultural societies have many of their own specific problems—ranging from a search for suitable rooms and instruction in the native language to taxation and the publication of our own newspapers—and solving them requires help from the local organs of self-government. For example, our deputy in the Tallinn City Soviet could attempt to solve a problem such as the following: at one time, back during the period of Bourgeois Estonia, practically all the national-cultural societies had their own centers where they could assemble and conduct their work. With the advent of the Soviet regime, these societies ceased to exist, and the buildings belonging to them were turned over to the state. Nowadays some of the societies which existed previously are being reborn. Perhaps we should give some thought as to whether these rooms and houses should be returned to them. Another question pertains to taxing the national-cultural societies. It is clear that funds, and considerable ones at that, are needed for normal operation. We cannot count merely on dues and on the contributions made by certain sponsors. And so we need to earn some money on our own. In time, these societies will have their own cooperatives, small enterprises a considerable portion of whose profits will be plowed into developing the national culture, Sunday schools and other forms of education, as well as into certain other needs of national-cultural autonomies. Such a practice as the following exists throughout the entire world: funds earmarked for the needs of national-cultural societies and autonomies are not imposed as taxes. And this is only fair and just. But why shouldn't we study this practice and apply it to ourselves? So the role to be played by the local organs of self-government and their deputies in solving these problems is great. And this is yet another confirmation of the point that our Association should try to obtain deputies' seats.

[V. Akimov] But these, you will agree, albeit very important matters, are, nonetheless, pragmatic, utilitarian problems for the Association, which it must solve at the level of the local soviets. I would also like to hear your opinion about the political aspects of the activities conducted by the national-cultural societies.

[Kh. Sheyn] Let me repeat again that we are only at the beginning of the path. In my opinion, the process of the emergence of national-cultural societies has taken place very rapidly in our republic. As far as I know, the Soviet Union still has no experience in such matters. The time has now come to define to what degree these societies reflect the interests of their own communities. The situation is such that not one of the national-cultural societies in Estonia can state today that it is the fully entitled representative of its own community. There are societies which unite from one-third to two-thirds of a nationality group. And there are those which include only 10-15 percent of a community's members. And if the process continues to develop—and the democratization of all spheres of our

public life permits us to hope for this—it is specifically the national-cultural societies which will be able to approach a situation whereby they will express the interests and aspirations of their own communities, i.e., to become a subject of activity. Only then will our actions in the political arena be well-grounded and have a firm foundation. And it is then that our Association will be able to speak out as an independent political force with its own program. On a general level, the basic, conceptual factors of our work have been set forth in the Declaration of the Third Forum of Estonia's Peoples Concerning the State of Affairs in the Republic. The first few lines of this document—which is very important for us—emphasize that we consider the fundamental issue in solving the problems of inter-ethnic relations to be democratic, genuine guarantees, as established in the USSR Constitution, for observing the principles of the republics' self-determination and sovereignty, as well as the voluntary nature of their inclusion in the Soviet Union. We support the aspirations of all democratically minded inhabitants of Estonia in their struggle for perestroika as well as for a final destalinization. And we affirm that neither among ourselves nor between us and the Estonians are there any internal conflicts, not to mention any menacing contradictions.

[V. Akimov] Just as was the case before, there are still many disputes concerning the residence qualification. Some of the inhabitants of this republic consider it to be undemocratic. What is your opinion on this matter?

[Kh. Sheyn] The Third Forum of Estonia's Peoples has stated its attitude toward such a qualification. We consider it to be the introduction of a correction. So far there is no other way to ensure that the problems of development of self-governing territories be solved intelligently, competently, and within the situation which is actually emerging. But we are opposed to denying the right to vote and be elected to the local soviets to those persons who just yesterday still possessed this right. Ascribing to the law a retroactive force—and, you know, that is precisely what happened in this case—is undemocratic. In our opinion, the residence qualification should be extended only to those persons who chose Estonia as their place of residence already after the Election Law was passed.

[V. Akimov] Some time ago a new expression—the "Russian Question"—made its appearance in our political lexicon. In the opinion of certain groups of the population, the attitude toward it constitutes a unique kind of test of democratism.

[Kh. Sheyn] Our Association has already emphasized on more than one occasion that the "Russian Question" in Estonia must be decided by the Russians themselves. Today the Slavic cultural societies included in the Association represent only four or five percent of the Russian-speaking population. And this, on the one hand, affirms once again that the movement along the path of creating national-cultural autonomy has still just barely begun, and, on the other hand, it attests to the very great heterogeneity of the Russian community. Its members are less integrated than others in the socio-cultural sphere. This is also

affected by the circumstance that the proportion of the intelligentsia in the Russian-speaking community is lower than it is in the others. Of course, we try to take all these factors into account. But one thing is indisputable for us: the fundamental guarantee of the free development of all the nationality groups in Estonia consists of recognizing the guarantees of the free development of the Estonian nation. I understand that people could grasp at my words and return the discussion again to the priority of the indigenous nation. But the reality of the situation is such that only with the firm confidence of the Estonian people in independence do we see the possibility for other nationality groups to develop. If we want to live better in the future, we must do everything to remove excessive politicization from our life. And, above all, this must be done in the sphere of culture and education. That is why we place particular hopes on the Slavic national-cultural societies, and we are hoping for the tolerance of the Russian community. We are not abandoning any kinds of discussions on the problems of national-cultural autonomy. We are now an absolutely independent organization. We are prepared to hold conversations with the Intermovement, the strike committees, or any other movements. But only on the following condition: if the discussion is calm and devoted to problems of cultural autonomy. We attempted to conduct a dialogue with the OSTK [expansion unknown], but we were unsuccessful. There were too many mutual suspicions and an inability to approach problems. But this is not a tragedy. Our lack of experience in holding such meetings most likely had an effect as well. We are firmly convinced of the following: mutual understanding has not been excluded; sooner or later everything must arrive at a norm. And the sooner the better.

[V. Akimov] Taking the Association's youth and its inexperience in conducting election campaigns into consideration, you will probably be seeking some kinds of possible alliances with other political forces. Whose support will you strive to gain, and whom will you yourselves support?

[Kh. Sheyn] Of all the movements existing in the republic today, we are closest to the People's Front. We grew out of the People's Front, and we have no programmatic differences with it regarding the nationality question. Furthermore, five representatives of the national-cultural societies are members of the People's Front Plenipotentiary Council.

Problems of Internal Soviet Armenian Diaspora Outlined

90US0184A Yerevan KOMSOMOLETS in Russian
12 Sep 89 p 3

[Article by S. Vardanyan and G. Rubinyan: "Who, If Not We?.."]

[Text] How many of us have given sufficient, serious thought to the perennial question: What is a nation? And what is the birthright of a nation—the works of art, architecture, or other material and non-material values; and perhaps yet even Man himself—the designer and

creator, capable of breathing life into stone, or into a word? What profit is there in conjecturing at this time, when not one—but millions of our fellow-countrymen have been swept around the world by the winds of fate, and find themselves excluded from the invigorating, interlocking chain which nurtures the nation's roots; and that means, they have been lost to the nation as its birthright. The foreign-language surnames of our fellow-countrymen, who have lost their language, culture and traditions—is that not the most bitter proof of that terrible penalty called "assimilation," which is already overtaking us, setting us on the edge of a precipice, into which we lack the strength to look...

It is first of all a question of the so-called internal Diaspora—Armenians who dwell on the territory of the Soviet Union. Strictly speaking, we have only just sounded the alarm concerning the fate of nearly two million of our fellow-countrymen—and to a not inconsiderable degree this was brought about by the upsurge of social-national self-awareness in the republic itself, on the crest of the events surrounding Nagornyy Karabakh. But having lived for many long years with such a condescending and disdainful attitude toward "our's" and in general to everything "our's," it is characteristic, and not only in questions of the nationalities policy, that these attitudes led to a truly tragic situation, when we simply "forgot" about the leaders, and at times had already given up the struggle "for survival" of the Armenian colonies within the country. Ties and contacts were maintained exclusively with the Diaspora abroad—moreover, and very significantly, at the state level: thus, at one time a Committee for Cultural Contacts with Armenians Abroad was established for this very purpose. And although pessimists predict the inevitable assimilation of the Armenians who by the will of fate find themselves in a foreign country, the thread of their ties with the Motherland are not only not being severed—on the contrary, they are beginning to grow stronger against the background of relaxation of international tensions, and the greater degree of freedom in them. And, moreover, the diaspora abroad has escaped the fate of the Soviet Armenians, who like other Soviet "National Minorities," experienced the bitter trials of all the excesses of Stalin's nationalities policy, which was constructed on the idea of super-centralism, with all the consequences that ensued. Thanks to which, no doubt, they have also managed to retain the genetic coding in a number of generations for the instinct of national self-preservation, expressed in the quite stable and well-organized systems of education, culture and other spheres.

And after all, the Armenians did not appear overnight on the territories which are now part of the USSR. The Armenian colony in Georgia, for example, has an almost 2,000-year history; the Armenian settlements in the Crimea and the Ukraine have been there for a thousand years; and in Moldavia and the North Caucasus, for many centuries. The picture of the contemporary distribution of Armenians in the Soviet Union looks much

more cloudy—to this day, no more-or-less serious or detailed research has been conducted on this question. There were, of course, certain scholars who have also dealt with this topic, but in the given instance it is a question of extensive and full-bodied research.

In addition to all of this, the migration of the populace from Armenia is not a thing of the past, but continues to this day—which has introduced significant changes to the map of Armenian settlement on the territory of the USSR. The mass deportation of Armenians in the 1930's and in 1949 played its role as well. To this day the precise number of Armenians deported is unknown, but the reduction in the populace of the republic in 1950 in comparison with 1949 was 67,600; if one takes into consideration natural and mechanical increases one can estimate that in 1949 alone, about 100,000 Armenians were uprooted. No less a depressing situation came to pass then as well in other regions of the country where our fellow-countrymen dwelt. Deported in 1944 and 1949 from the Crimea, and partially from Georgia and the North Caucasus, they added to the number of Armenians in Siberia and Central Asia.

The migration process—true, this time voluntarily—continued in the so-called years of stagnation as well. In the years 1970-1984 alone, 4,491 citizens of Armenia moved to Kazakhstan; 3,962 to Uzbekistan; 1,950 to Turkmenia; 747 to Tajikistan; and 502 to Kirghizia (!!!) During those same years about 103,000 people moved from Armenia to the RSFSR (of which about 19,000 moved to Krasnodar Kray, and 6,636 moved to Rostov Oblast); moving to the Ukraine were 22,793; to Georgia, 20,246 (of which, 2,159 went to Abkhazia, and 604 to Adzharia); to Moldavia, 1,449; to Belorussia, 691; to Latvia, 992; to Estonia, 763; and to Lithuania, 573. The statistics are so stunning that they can in no way be written off to chance. But neither is commentary necessary—the motives for such mass resettlements in search of "a better life" are completely clear, and represent quite vividly the degree to which society is troubled.

Nevertheless, there is no paradox in the fact that, having increased in numbers over the years, the internal Diaspora has gradually ceased to live a full-bodied national life. For example—whereas, in Central Asia at the dawn of Soviet rule (1918) there were 80,000 Armenians living in the cities of Tashkent, Ashkhabad, Samarkand, Chardzhou, Fergana, Andizhan and other cities; fifteen Armenian schools were opened, as well as four kindergartens, nine libraries, and 16 reading rooms; and workers' houses with their amateur and theatrical groups; textbooks were compiled and published, and various newspapers were opened—today there are no Armenian schools there, nor any Armenian newspapers.

The situation is complicated as well in Krasnodar Kray, where Armenians came to live several centuries ago. In the 1920's there were 140 Armenian schools in the region. Krasnodar hosted an Armenian State Theater a National University, and the Armenian Department of Proletarian Writers; newspapers, magazines and books

were published in Armenian, and there were Armenian-language radio programs. Few people know that an Armenian national region was once situated between Maykop and Tuapse, from 1925-1953. It included 68 Armenian villages and farmsteads (with Shaumyan as the center), and had its own newspaper, radio broadcasts and schools. Today out of 140 Armenian schools in Krasnodar Kray there are now only three remaining. And these comprise the total number of Armenian schools on the territory of the RSFSR (of course we are talking about permanently-functioning schools, and not about those which were opened by the Armenian children evacuated from the disaster zone).

Alas, this situation was a direct result of the years of Stalin's authoritarian rule, and subsequently his successors as well: Collectivization with its multitude of victims; mass repressions; the struggle with nationalism and cosmopolitanism... Which of the nations of the USSR has not experienced the enormous losses dealt by the banal policy with respect to the national regions, built on a single model and image, and has not felt the echo of those tragedies? Is it necessary to say how worthless and at times harmful were the stereotyped slogans and exclamations, declared for decades, about friendship and the triumph of internationalism, about the development and blending of nations. How many scholars in their time built their dissertations on the fact that, in time, all languages would blend into one! The apogee of magniloquence in nationalities policy was the myth of the formation of a single nation—a Soviet nation... It is not for nothing that recently everyone has been speaking with great alarm about the loss of national traditions and national thinking in Armenia itself: Could the internal Diaspora live by different laws? Of course, there were attempts to protect one's own person there too, one's unique culture and traditions; but they were all smashed by the persecution, cloaked with the bugbear of accusations of nationalism. Those who could find the strength to do so, resisted: they wrote complaints, and they went around to the authorities. But as a rule, their efforts did not bring results, although there were rare exceptions. Thus, for example, for many years the inhabitants of the Armenian village of Moldovka in Adlerskiy Rayon of Krasnodar Kray had sent envoys to the USSR Supreme Soviet, petitioning, begging, and demanding that an Armenian school be opened in their village. Here is an excerpt from a letter they sent to Leonid Brezhnev in 1969: "We have appealed to you in three letters, and have sent four telegrams, but were not favored with a reply. Apparently our letters and telegrams are not reaching you. If we do not receive a reply this time, we will be forced to try for a personal audience with you. We are asking permission to open an Armenian school. But the local authorities are subjecting us to fines in the amount of 20-30 rubles simply because we want our children to be able to read their native language. We are being threatened with arrest and prison..."

Their struggle was crowned with success. A school was opened in Moldovka that very year. But five years later,

on the eve of a new academic year, the school was torn down on instructions of the local authorities, and the textbooks sent from Armenia as a gift were burned. Today School No 66 in Moldovka is again operating, but the situation is very difficult, because of the threat of closure which hangs over them. True, this time for an altogether different reason—now it is the Armenian parents themselves who do not want to send their children to be trained in a national school, and each class amounts to only 8 or 9 children in all. What of it? The logic of the phenomena is inexorable: the instinct of national self-preservation which prevailed for decades has been rooted out; replacing it is another kind of self-preservation, in the direct, vital meaning of the word.

It is time to understand at last that the Diaspora, both the external and internal kind, is a single concept; and this is also the Armenian nation. And that means that it has the total right to be included in the existing system, in the sphere of the state in the republics, and it has the right to state protection, to live its common life as a nation. Who, if not we, should be extending the hand of assistance to our brothers and sisters, who have been uprooted from their native land? Who, if not we, should be concerned for their fate?

Remember them—our Georganized countrymen, the old and new Armenians of the Ukraine and Crimea; the Georgians of Dagestan, Northern Osetia, Checheno-Ingushetia and Stavropol... Remember the Krasnodar Armenians, the overwhelming majority of whom are Amshenites, but there are among them also exiles from Vano, Sasun, Yerzik and Mush; and not so long ago, people from Akhalkalaki settled here too. Remember those living in Armavir, in Adygeyskiy Autonomous Okrug, Stavropol Oblast; and the Cherkessy Armenians (Cherkesogay), who have long since forgotten their native language. Remember the Armenians from the villages of Sultan Nukhi and Mirzabeklu of Kutkashenskiy Rayon of the Azerbaijan SSR, who have become Turkic-speakers but have kept their faith and national self-awareness.

Remember the long-forgotten fate of the Armenians living on the left bank of the Kura in the outlying villages around Mt. Nukha, who were forced to adopt the Muslim faith... According to eye-witness historians, in 1751 after a bloody battle here, from 14,000 to 15,480 families were forced to renounce their Christian faith, and at the beginning of the present century, the total number of Armenians who adopted the Muslim faith had reached approximately 100,000. And nevertheless even they for a long time preserved their Armenian placenames, their memory of national perceptions and traditions, and certain families preserved Armenian script, and to this day on the outskirts of these village one can see khachkary, gravestones, with Armenian inscriptions and the ruins of churches and cathedrals. For whom are we waiting? Who will take up the study of the past, and the present internal Diaspora, and when? Who will systematically organize the available data on the